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Problems Vital to Our Religion

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PROBLEMS VITAL

TO

OUR RELIGION

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BY

W. A. LICHTENWALLNER

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PREFACE

During the year 1897, while the author was a reporter on one of the daily newspapers in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, he attended a lecture delivered by Robert G. Ingersoll in that city. During his lecture Mr. Ingersoll made statement after statement which to the author seemed highly sacrilegious. What perfectly astounded him was that these statements, the more blasphemous they seemed, the more liberal was the applause they received from all parts of the large and crowded auditorium. The author had been brought up a Lutheran and was then strictly orthodox. That night after the lecture he determined that if he would ever have the leisure to do so, he would investigate and study the fundamentals of the Christian Faith and find out for himself what ground there was for the attacks that were being made upon it. He then felt quite confident that such investigation would prove that his religion was solidly founded and fully able to withstand all criticism.

More than twenty years have since elapsed. The author did not have the opportunity to take up this study fully till of late years. The results of his investigation are given in the following pages. He does not hesitate to express his regrets that some of the beliefs he had regarded as precious and sacred from youth up, he felt compelled to discard. However, the real essence of Christianity consists, not

in the religious dogmas that were invented by man in times of superstition, but in the true and wonderful teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. It is true, these teachings as they were handed down from one generation to another, could not avoid being in a slight measure modified by the beliefs and doctrines that sprung up in the early and dark days of their transmission. But we have not lost their value because of this. They were recorded, and from time to time recopied on new papyrus-rolls, by earnest and sincere seekers after the truth, so that we have them in the main, and for all essential purposes, as they were originally taught.

This book has been written for a twofold purpose:

First: To aid in awakening the church authorities to the fact that the church is fast losing ground because of its persistence in holding on to antiquated dogmas.

Second: To aid in awakening many thousands of our good and well meaning people to the serious mistake they are making to remain outside of the church simply because they cannot accept some of its doctrines.

What first brought the church into existence was the purpose to reform the then prevailing religious beliefs and do away with all excesses. If reform was its watchword, then it should be so still. If there is need of reform, it needs our help. We can be of far more service from within the church than we can from without.

The Christian church has been the greatest factor for good in the world's history. Our advanced civilization we owe to the church more than to any other cause. Each and all of us are vitally interested not only in its preservation, but also in being numbered with its active adherents.

W. A. LICHTENWALLNER.

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The Old Testament

Is the Christian religion a supernaturally revealed religion, or has it had, like all other religions, a natural or human origin and a natural growth or development?

The so-called orthodox Christian belief is that the Old Testament, on which Christianity was founded, is the divinely inspired word of God. The accounts of the Creation and of the origin of man, as given in the Book of Genesis, are believed to have been divinely revealed to the writer of that sacred book. The Israelites were God's chosen people and God entered into a covenant with them favoring them above all other peoples so long as they faithfully performed their part of the covenant. Israel's codes of laws, including the ten commandments, are believed to have come directly from God, prescribed and ordained by Him for Israel's government.

On the other hand, they who can place no faith in the supernatural origin of the Christian religion believe that the Old Testament is simply a compilation of the early literature of the Hebrew race, and that the narrative portions of the Pentateuch are composed largely of traditions and legends, the same as is the case with the sacred books and early literature of all the other oriental nations. The claim of the Israelites that they were God's chosen people had its origin in their erroneous conception of Jehovah, whom they regarded as God of Israel only. They attributed the authorship of their laws to Jehovah because, as it appears, this was the custom in that

early age, neighboring nations likewise ascribing the authorship of their laws to their own particular God.

We sometimes hear it asserted that a true conception of God could not have been acquired by the Jews without the aid of divine revelation. It is a fact, however, that for many centuries the Jewish conception of Jehovah was, to say the least, very crude. He was originally regarded by them not as the Universal Father of mankind, but as a mere tribal god. Jehovah, or "Yahveh" as they originally called him, was the god of the Jews only. They did not differ in this respect from neighboring peoples who likewise had their own gods, as the Ammonites whose god was Milcom, the Moabites whose god was Chemosh, or the Philistines whose god was Dagon. Yahveh, the same as all other tribal gods, was believed by his people to take delight in the sweet savours arising from animals burnt on the altar of sacrifice. Yahveh, in common with all tribal gods, was believed to be friendly to his own people only, and constantly to aid them in overcoming and destroying their enemies. In time as the Jews became more enlightened they began to regard Jehovah as a righteous god and clothed him with moral attributes.

For many centuries the Jews held very vague ideas as to the future life. They believed that at death their spirits went to sheol, a place by them regarded as a vast subterranean tomb. No thought of retribution was connected with this deep and gloomy underworld. It was a common receptacle for all, both the good and the wicked. The dis-

tinctions there made were believed to be national, not moral. In truth the Israelites were so completely wrapped up in the welfare, both present and future, of their people as a whole that they gave little or no thought to the ultimate fate of the individual. It was with the nation that Jehovah had established his covenant. The nation was regarded as the unit. The religious life of the individual was entirely subordinate to that of the nation. The individual was quite content to have poured his little stream of life and service into the tide of national life. But when the nation came to an end with the captivity, the time their whole people were carried off into a foreign land, the individual at once arose in importance. The nation had fallen, but the individual remained. It was from the Persians during the Exile and not thru divine revelation, that they acquired a fixed belief in the immortality of the soul.

The prophet Ezekiel, who wrote during the Exile, was the first to introduce the doctrine of individual retribution. He confines the retribution, however, to the present life, claiming that misfortune and suffering here in this life are certain to befall the wicked, while earthly happiness and prosperity will be the reward of those who here lead worthy lives.

After the Restoration, severely schooled and chastened as they had been by long years of adversity, the Israelites became intensely religious. All foreign wives were put away for fear the worship of false gods might again be introduced. All religious rites ordained by Jehovah were strictly observed and all of his commandments were faithfully kept. They fully believed that Jehovah would now fulfil

his part of the covenant, would help them to overcome their enemies and cause them to become a great and prosperous people. But they were bitterly disappointed, for the time soon came when they were again compelled to submit to a foreign yoke and they became grievously oppressed. The belief now gradually spread among them that their present misfortunes and calamities had befallen them, not because Jehovah had forsaken them or was displeased with them, but because he was testing and disciplining them.

Having acquired the belief in immortality, also believing that their present misfortunes were owing to Jehovah's intent to discipline them, and realizing that retribution does not always occur in the present life, as had been preached by Ezekiel, but that the wicked sometimes prosper in this life while the good are at times overtaken with misfortune, they reasonably concluded that the present life is a life of trial or probation and that full retribution does not take place until in the future life. Sheol, which for many centuries had been regarded as a place where no moral distinction was made, now appears as divided into separate receptacles for the good and the bad. One part of Sheol became known as gehenna, a lake of fire and brimstone, and the other was called paradise or heaven. The present world was regarded as evil, and as being by permission of Jehovah under the domination of Satan. The Christian era was ushered in with the proclamation that this evil world would now end and that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. We thus find that the belief that the present life is a life of probation and that retribution will follow in the future life, did not

come to Israel thru revelation but that it was strictly human in its origin and that it was a natural growth or development out of former existing beliefs. Likewise every advance made by them in their conception of the Deity was brought about from natural causes and not thru revelation. The exalted conception of Jehovah as the Universal Father of all mankind was now and then reached by an earnest seeker after the truth, but at no time did this become the prevailing belief among the Jews. It is a fact that throughout their entire history down to and including the time of Jesus of Nazareth, Jehovah was regarded by the great body of Jews as a mere national god, as god of the Jews only. How can it be possible that a true conception of God was divinely revealed to the Jews when at no time in their history did they as people have aught but a very imperfect conception of God?

It may well be asked, why should divine revelation have been made to the Hebrews alone? The Hebrews held an inferior position among the nations of the earth at almost every stage of their history. Several of their neighbors had a larger population and were fully as civilized. At least one other nation, the Parseans, were as earnest seekers after the true God and had as exalted a conception of God as did the Jews. Why should divine revelation have been made only to the Jews? Are we to suppose that the salvation of all the other nations, both great and small, was a matter of indifference to the Almighty? That God revealed himself to a few involves an act of injustice toward the many. At a later period Christ was sent into the world, we are taught, for the purpose to reveal the true God and to

offer himself as an atoning sacrifice for his people. Here again the revelation was made to, and knowledge of the atonement reached, a comparatively few inhabitants of the earth. Many millions of God's people in every age had no opportunity to know and to believe in Christ. Are they all lost? The Christian peoples constitute today not over one-third the population of the earth. The Buddhists alone outnumber the Christians by fully fifty millions. The Buddhist is just as honest and sincere in his belief, and is just as sincere in believing that his religion was supernaturally revealed, as is the Christian. Is his soul lost because the Faith he believes in happens to be some other than the Christian Faith, which very few of them had the opportunity of knowing? We say again, a revelation made to a few would have been manifestly unjust toward the many, and we cannot believe it because we know that the great God is just and impartial toward all.

The Old Testament writings cannot be of divinely revealed or inspired origin because they ascribe a very low moral character to our God.

The Pentateuch, more particularly, clothes Him with merely human attributes and passions and represents Him as being directly responsible for many cruel and inhuman acts. He is represented as changing His mind and repenting for what He has done. He is represented as giving vent to feelings of hatred and of revenge. He is represented as causing men to practice deception and to despoil others of their property under false pretense. He is represented as ordering the slaying in cold blood of hundreds of women and innocent children. Let us examine some

of these Old Testament representations of the Deity more in detail. In one of the first chapters of Genesis we read that Cain made an offering of the fruits of the field and Abel made an offering of the firstlings of his flock slain upon the altar of sacrifice. Cain's innocent offering was rejected and Abel's bloody sacrifice was accepted, and thus Jehovah from the very beginning is represented as preferring blood and the slaughter of victims of which we find so much throughout the Old Testament.

Jehovah hated Esau and loved Jacob (Malachi 1:2, 3) who deceived his father Isaac. In the whole of the unseemly transactions between Jacob and Laban, Jehovah sides with Jacob and actively cooperates with him in cheating his father-in-law.

Pharaoh persisted in forbidding the Israelites from leaving Egypt because God, we are told, had hardened Pharaoh's heart. At the visitation of every plague Pharaoh relented and would have interposed no further objection to their withdrawal had not God in every instance again hardened his heart. Thus is ascribed an act of duplicity to our God which is unbelievable. The last plague visited upon the Egyptians was the slaying of the first-born of every single family throughout all Egypt. Many hundreds of innocent children and many hundreds of fathers and mothers, who happened to be the first-born of their parents' families, for no fault of their own, were thus suddenly slain in cold blood. "And there was a great cry in Egypt," we read in Exodus 12:30, "for there was not a house where there was not one dead." It cannot be possible that we have formed so low an estimate of our God as to believe that He inflicted this, one of the most cruel, inhuman

and monstrous punishments ever recorded in the history of man.

In the 11th and 12th chapters of Exodus we read that the Lord said unto Moses, "Speak now in the ears of the people and let them ask every man of his neighbor, and every woman of her neighbor, jewels of silver and jewels of gold * * * and the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they asked of the Egyptians jewels of silver and jewels of gold and raiment, and Jehovah gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. And they despoiled the Egyptians." To impose on the generosity of a gratuitous lender with the view of despoiling him is the most despicable kind of larceny and yet we are told that Jehovah by miraculous interposition gave the Israelites favor in the sight of the Egyptians so that they could thus defraud the Egyptians to the largest extent possible. That our God would stoop to anything so low and mean it is impossible for us to believe. In I Kings 22:23, we are told that the Lord "put a lying spirit" in the mouth of the prophets so that they deceived King Ahab and beguiled him to his destruction. Even St. Paul so mistakes the character of God that in 2 Thessalonians 2:11, he says, "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion[1] that they should believe a lie." Any Scripture that states that God has practiced deceit, does not state the truth and therefore cannot have been inspired.

The Old Testament ascribes a low moral character to God also in the numerous acts of extreme

[1] "God sendeth them a working of error," as given in the Revised Version.

cruelty He is alleged to have committed. His alleged destruction of the first-born of every family throughout all Egypt has already been referred to. In their conquest of the land of Canaan the Israelites took many cities, over a hundred we are told, and in nearly every instance they butchered all of the inhabitants, not only the men, but the women and children. The Canaanites had been in possession of the land for many generations. It rightfully belonged to them. They worshipped their own tribal gods the same as did Israel. In some respects they were more civilized than was Israel. But we are told that they were a very wicked people, yet according to Israel's own story they do not appear to have been more wicked than were the Israelites. History does not record a more unjust, cruel and barbarous invasion and conquest than that of the land of Canaan by Israel. Although they butchered the men, women and children of many of the cities that were taken, yet the Israelites were punished by Jehovah, we are told, because they did not make clean work of it and exterminate them altogether. Because of Israel's slow work in the slaughter of the natives, Jehovah concluded, it appears, to take a hand in it himself. At one time "He cast down great stones from heaven" (Joshua 10:11) upon Israel's enemies and the stones, it is stated, killed more people than were slain by Israel's swords. At another time, the sun stood still in the midst of heaven and hasted not to go down about a whole day, so that the Israelites could keep up the slaughter and avenge themselves upon their enemies.

Of the many cities taken and destroyed by Israel a notable instance is that of Jericho, whose walls tumbled down as if by magic and by Jehovah's behest, it is stated, all of the inhabitants, every man, woman and child, were slain by the sword, and no one was spared save one woman who was a harlot, Rahab by name. Her despicable treachery in betraying her own people was deemed so worthy an act that she and her family alone, of all the inhabitants of the city, were spared their lives. There is nothing in the Old Testament so instinct with fanatic tribalism as is this account of the destruction of Jericho and the sparing of the harlot Rahab.

The many acts of barbarous cruelty ascribed to Jehovah in the Old Testament we now know could never have occurred. That the Israelites sincerely believed them to be true there is no doubt, and why? Because of their mistaken conception of Jehovah in regarding Him as God of their own people only. It was then a common belief, not only with Israel but with all their neighbors, that every tribal god actively assisted his people in overcoming their enemies. That the nature of such assistance from their god was on a level with the morals of that particular age, we may naturally expect.

Such miraculous stories as casting down stones from heaven, causing the walls of a city to tumble down, and making the sun to stand still for a whole day, all of them undoubtedly had their origin in traditions handed down through successive generations in an age when writing was difficult and little understood and when very few writings were preserved. Tradition, even among an enlightened peo-

ple, we know to be very unreliable[1]. In a superstitious age it is much worse. A plain unembellished narrative of historic incidents, in time by much oral repetition, will likely become a truly wonderful tale, particularly among an intensely patriotic people. When narratives are handed down from father to son for so long as were Israel's, the time comes when they are actually believed, however wonderful. When they were finally reduced to writing in the shape as we now have them in the Old Testament, we have not the least doubt that the Old Testament authors were perfectly sincere in believing that they had actually occurred just as they are recorded.

The accounts as given in the Old Testament of the Creation and of the Deluge could not have been divinely revealed, for they are now known to be inaccurate.

According to the Old Testament chronology the earth was created a little more than 6,000 years ago[2]. Geology has disclosed by testimony unmistakable in its character that the earth is of immense antiquity, covering at least a million of years, and that man first appeared at a comparatively late period in the earth's existence, but at the lowest calculation not less than 30,000 years ago. The evidence furnished by the stratified rocks as to the great age of the earth and the first appearance thereon of man, is fully corroborated by the sciences of astronomy, an-

[1]"Its tendency is patriotic and poetical. Its tendency is to magnify and to exaggerate," someone has said.

[2]According to the Hebrew Bible man was created 4157 Before Christ; according to the Samaritan Bible, 4243 B. C.; according to the Septuagint, 5328 B. C.

thropology, archaeology, paleontology and comparative philology. The Creation story as given in the Old Testament is not sustained by any of the modern sciences. Everyone of them that at all bears on the subject, plainly refutes it.

The age of the world as recorded in the Bible is refuted not only by the sciences, but also by historical records. Extensive excavations have of recent years been made amidst the ruins of ancient cities in Babylonia and Assyria. In magnificent temples that have been unearthed were found large libraries consisting of cuneiform writings inscribed or impressed on tablets of stone, bronze, iron and clay. These ancient records have indisputably established the fact that there was an advanced and flourishing civilization in these countries and that they contained large and populous cities, long before the date which the Old Testament ascribes to the creation of man and of the world.[1]

According to the Biblical account heaven and earth were created in six days. We now know that the earth acquired its adornment of vegetable and animal life not in six days, but by a gradual process extending over many centuries and embracing unnumbered generations of living forms. Many upholders of the faith in divine revelation maintain that the six days were intended to mean six aeons or long indefinite periods of time. The Scripture text, however, is very specific on this point. After each day's work the text expressly states, "and the eve-

[1]According to the Biblical account, the different races of men on earth have all sprung from one single family, the family of Noah, and yet we find Negroes as clearly developed in type as they are today, outlined on monuments in Egypt, reaching back long prior to the time of Noah.

ning and the morning were the first day," "and the evening and the morning were the second day," and so on to the sixth. And when the six days' work of creation was completed the text states, "and He rested on the seventh day from all his work which He had made, and God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because that in it He rested from all his work which God had created and made" (Genesis 2:23). At another place we read: "For in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is and rested the seventh day" (Exodus 20:11). To make each day mean an aeon or an indefinite period of time, when the langauge used is so plain and unmistakable, is certainly placing a very constrained construction on the text. If the account is the revealed word of God no language would have been used that is misleading.

Many of the erroneous impressions and views about the universe that prevailed before the time of Copernicus and Galileo, plainly appear in the biblical account of the Creation. The earth was then believed to have a flat surface surrounded by the ocean and was regarded as the centre of the universe. The Hebrews had no conception of an infinite ethereal space. Heaven was the firmament which Jehovah created on the second day (Genesis 1:7, 8) for the purpose of dividing the waters above from the waters beneath. The firmament was believed to be a solid arched or vaulted dome resting upon the pillars of the earth (Job 26:11). On the top of this dome were the reservoirs of "the waters above the heaven" which supplied the rain and the dew. In the dome were windows which were opened when

the rain fell (Genesis 7:11). The sun and the stars were believed to be mere luminaries fastened to and suspended from the firmament for the purpose of giving the earth light. It is very evident that these were the views of the writer of the Creation epic. He tells us that it took four days to create the earth and what it contains, while it took only one day to create the unnumbered millions of heavenly bodies. The earth we know to be part of a planetary system, and yet we are told in the Creation account that the earth was created prior to the whole system from which it sprung. All vegetation depends for its growth on the actinic principle in the sun's rays, and yet all vegetation appeared on the third day, while the sunlight was not seen till the fourth day.

There are two distinct narratives of the Creation, the one contained in the first chapter and the other contained in the second chapter of the Book of Genesis[1]. These two narratives do not agree, but are at variance with one another. In the first place, the order of creation is different. In the first chapter the order given is vegetation, animals, man (male and female); in the second chapter the order is man, trees, animals, woman. In the first chapter man is made last of all. In the second chapter man is made first of all, before vegetation and before the animals. In the first chapter man and woman are created together. In the second chapter man at first is all alone. In the first chapter man is given dominion over all the earth and every living thing that moveth upon the earth, receiving the whole great earth as

[1]The first narrative ends more properly at Gen. 2:3.

his portion, while in the second chapter he is confined in a very limited sphere, in a garden.

If the biblical account of the Creation came to the Hebrews through divine revelation, it would necessarily have been original with the Hebrews. We have every reason to believe, however, that such was not the case. While excavations were being made some years ago amid the ruins of a magnificent palace in Babylon, there was discovered in the library of the palace the Babylonian Creation-Epic, inscribed on seven tablets of stone. This creation epic begins by stating that in the Beginning, before heaven and earth were made, there was only the primaeval ocean, which is personified as a male and female being, Apsu and Tiamat. A contest arose among the gods and as a result Marmaduk, the God of Light, smote Tiamat into two parts. Out of one part he produced the firmament of heaven and out of the other part he fashioned the earth. He then proceeds to form, in their order, the plants, the animals and finally man, who is made out of clay. The Babylonian and the Hebrew creation epics are in many respects strikingly similar, and there is but little doubt that the Hebrew originated from the Babylonian, which is much the older. It is true, the Hebrew creation epic is much superior to the Babylonian, as it is pervaded and dominated by far purer and nobler spiritual ideas. It was written at a much later period, when there had been much advance in spiritual thought. In fact, the grand epic as given in the first chapter of Genesis must have been written at a comparatively late period when Jehovah was already regarded, by the more ad-

vanced thinkers among the Hebrews, not so much as the tribal god of the Hebrews as the one Supreme God over all.

Nor could the account of the Deluge have been of inspired origin. In Gen. 6:6, 7, we read, "And it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth and it grieved him at his heart. And Jehovah said I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground; both man and beast, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens; for it repenteth me that I have made them." God is here clothed with purely human attributes, repentance and grief. The Almighty being all-wise and unchangeable, it is inconceivable that He should repent and grieve at what He had done.

Furthermore, why should God fill this world with his own children, knowing that in a comparatively short time He would have to destroy them. As someone has stated, "He tells us how to raise our children, and yet He could not raise His and had to destroy them." It is a very unlikely story.

It has been claimed that the Deluge was not a universal but a local deluge. The Old Testament, however, is very explicit on this point:

"And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth, and all the high mountains that were under the whole heaven were covered." Gen. 7:19.

"And every living thing was destroyed that was upon the face of the ground, both man and cattle and creeping things and birds of the heaven, and they were destroyed from the earth, and Noah only was left, and they that were with him in the ark." Gen. 7:23.

That there was a universal deluge as described is not only improbable but impossible. There is not enough water on the earth that could have flooded the whole earth as described, covering the highest mountain peaks. In that early day when the difficulties and dangers of travel were very great, how was it possible for Noah and his three sons to make long journeys into every part of the world to gather and bring home all the animals of every kind, the fowl of the air and the myriads of insects included in the "creeping things," both of tropical and frigid zones? The ark could not possibly have held them all, and food sufficient for their sustenance until revived vegetation should make fresh food again procurable. If only a few pair of each kind of animal were taken into the ark, and all the rest destroyed, what did all the carnivorous beasts that were in the ark feed on during and after the flood? During the long time it took for the waters to abate, and while the ark was resting on one of the highest mountain peaks, where there is perpetual snow and ice, how could Noah and family and all the tropical animals possibly have endured and survived the intense cold?

In the Book of Genesis there are two different and contradictory accounts of the Deluge, just as there are two varying accounts of the Creation. Of the two accounts of the Creation, one follows the other; but of the two accounts of the Deluge, one is spliced into the other. The reason why we happen to have two different accounts of the Creation and of the Flood, we will take up later on.

The two accounts of the Deluge contradict one another in two particulars:

First. According to Gen. 7:12, and Gen. 8:6-12, the Flood lasted 54 days (40+7+7). According to Gen. 7:24 and Gen. 8:3, the Flood lasted 150 days.

Second. According to Gen. 6:19, 20, Noah was directed to take with him into the ark one pair of all animals, whether clean or unclean. According to Gen. 7:2, 3, Noah was directed to take with him into the ark seven pair of all clean and two pair of all unclean animals. If the writer of the Pentateuch was divinely inspired, how can these contradictions be accounted for?

The Bible story of the Flood is undoubtedly no more than a highly colored tradition of a local flood destroying many lives at an early day, the same as we find in the history of many other countries. Babylon, with its two great rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, was in a peculiar sense the land of floods and it likewise had its deluge epic, older than the Hebrew and very similar. A copy of it, inscribed on a stone tablet, has in recent years been discovered in excavations made among the ruins of that country. It sets forth that Bel, the storm god, determined to send a flood as a judgment on the sins of the people. The goddes Ea revealed to Sipnasti (Noah) in a dream how he might construct a ship, six stories high. For six days rain fell in torrents. Ark in sight of Mt. Nisir. Sipnasti sends forth a dove, then a swallow, and lastly, a raven, which returned not. Ea besought Bel nevermore to send a flood upon the earth. Bel suffered himself to be persuaded.

Another reason why we cannot believe in divine

revelation is because of the bloody sacrifices. These could not have been instituted by God and exacted by Him of the Hebrews, as is set forth and claimed in the Old Testament.

We are told that shortly after the Flood "Noah built an altar unto Jehovah and took of every clean beast and of every clean bird and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And Jehovah smelt the sweet savor; and Jehovah said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, for that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite anymore everything living as I have done." Gen. 8:21, 22.

In the early Hebrew religion all worship took the form of sacrifice, offerings either of animals or of the fruits of the field. Not only did animal sacrifice receive the divine sanction, we are told, but this mode of worship was expressly exacted of Israel by Jehovah. Thus in Exodus 20:24, we read that God said to Moses, "An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings and thy peace-offerings, thine sheep and thine oxen." In Exodus 29:25 God directs that the animals be burnt on the altar "for a sweet savor before Jehovah".[1] It is stated that at times God even gave minute directions as to what was to be done with the animal offered for sacrifice. Thus in Exodus 29:11-14, we read that God directed, "And thou shalt kill the bullock before Jehovah at the door of the tent of meeting. And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock and put it upon the horns of the altar with

[1]Why are not animal sacrifices exacted of us now? They ought to be as sweet a savor to Jehovah now as at any time.

thy finger, and thou shalt pour out all the blood at the base of the altar. And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul upon the liver and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and burn them upon the altar, but the flesh of the bullock and its skin, and its dung, shalt thou burn with fire without the camp; it is a sin-offering."

Upon every day of each year Israel was required by Jehovah to offer a bullock as a sin-offering and also two lambs as burnt-offerings, one in the morning and the other in the evening. (Exodus 29:36-38.) The first-born of all animals Jehovah required to be slaughtered. He required numerous other animal sacrifices, such as, at the birth of every child, at the circumcision of every male, at every marriage, in fulfillment of every vow, at the making of every contract, at the purification of woman after childbirth, when making an oath or a vow, at the commission of every sin through ignorance, at the coming of a traveler, every time when lieing to or deceiving one's neighbor, etc. Then there were special burnt-offerings required by Jehovah on each Sabbath, at every new-moon, and elaborate sacrifices on their many festival days.

Can we believe that Jehovah required of the Israelites all of these numerous, bloody, sacrifical rites? That He even prescribed all the little details of this barbarous and revolting kind of worship, as is stated in the Pentateuch, is beyond all intelligent belief.

Sacrifices did not originate with the Hebrews. They were in fact the backbone of all, or nearly all, the early religious beliefs. Eating and drinking together, we know, promote fellowship and bring those

participating into closer communion. The offering of meat and cereals and of wine upon the altar was believed to bring into closer communion the worshipper with his God. Anything offered on the altar was considered as being literally food for the gods. The meats offered were burnt so that the gods might enjoy the sweet savors arising therefrom. The religions of the Babylonians, of the Canaanites and of other neighbors of the Israelites likewise enjoined sacrifices. Jehovah did not institute or sanction sacrifice. They constituted the Hebrew form of worship because they constituted the common form of worship of primitive times.

As they became more enlightened and civilized, sacrifices began to grow into disfavor with the more intelligent class of Hebrews. Even as early as King David's time we read that Samuel said: "Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah. Behold to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams." 1 Samuel 15:22.

It appears very evident that Samuel did not believe that sacrifices were commanded and required by God, or he would not have said "To obey is better than sacrifice." King David also writes, "Sacrifice and offering Thou (God) hast no delight in." Psalms 40:6.

At later periods in Israel's history, sacrifices were looked upon in a still less favorable light, as appears from the following Old Testament quotations:

"What unto me is the multitude of your sacrifices? saith Jehovah. I have had enough of the burnt-offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts, and I de-

light not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs or of he-goats . . . yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear, your hands are full of blood." Isaiah 1:11-15.

"For I desire goodness and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings." Hosea 6:6.

"Will Jehovah be pleased with thousand of rams or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgressions, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God." Micah 6:7, 8.

Isaiah, Hosea and Micah surely would not have regarded animal sacrifices with so much disfavor had they believed, as did the writer or compiler of the Book of Exodus, that sacrifices were instituted and exacted of the Jews by Jehovah.

The Mosaic laws of the Pentateuch prescribed for the government of the Hebrews, were they of divine origin?

Whenever any set of laws are given to the Israelites for their government, the Pentateuch always states that Moses received the laws direct from Jehovah, as for example:

"This is what Jehovah has commanded." Leviticus 17-2.

"These are the ordinances (Jehovah speaking to Moses) which thou shalt set before them." Exodus 21:1.

"These are the statutes and ordinances (Jehovah again speaking to Moses) which ye shall observe." Deut. 12:1.

It has been discovered that many of these laws, which are represented as having come direct from Jehovah, are strikingly similar to the laws contained in another code of laws known as the Hammurabi Code[1], which was in existence long before the time of Moses.

Hammurabi, who lived about 2250 B. C. and 800 years before the time of Moses, was one of the earliest and most powerful kings of Babylonia. After he had driven out of the country the Elamites, the hereditary foes of Babylonia, and had amalgamated all parts of his kingdom into one united whole, with the city of Babylon as the political and religious center, he carefully prepared a code of laws for the government of his country.

The Hammurabi code of laws was discovered by the French archaeologist, de Morgan, and by V. Schler in excavations by them made in Susa in the year 1902. They found them engraved on a monumental block of diorite nearly 8 feet high containing 282 paragraphs of laws. This polished shaft bears on its top the likeness of King Hammurabi in the act of receiving these laws from the sun god, Shamash, the supreme judge of heaven and earth. While the Hammurabi code deals exclusively with civil enactments and while, on the other hand, the Hebrew code is distinctively religious in its purpose, yet in many of the laws contained in both codes there is so

[1]See "Babel and Bible," by Frederick Delitzsch, "Comparative Religion," by Louis Henry Jordan, also "The Biblical World," Vol. 26:249.

marked a similarity not only in the substance matter but even in phraseology, that the inference seems plain and convincing that Moses must have made free use of the Hammurabi code while preparing and framing his code of laws for the government of the Israelites.

That Moses had knowledge of the Hammurabi code may be inferred from the fact that the code was in force in countries within which, or contiguous to which, Moses lived for longer or shorter periods We do not for a moment believe that Moses practiced an imposition on the Israelites at the time he provided a code of laws for their government. In order to procure for his people the best laws possible, he very properly and naturally would consult and copy from the laws of older people. Do not we do the same? Whenever a new state constitution is framed by any one state of our United States, its framers are wont to consult and to copy from the constitutions of other states and of other countries and thus profit by the experience of others.

When Moses dedicated his laws to the Hebrew God and made it appear that they had been received from Jehovah, he simply followed the custom of his time. Every tribal god was believed to be the guiding and controlling spirit of his people in all things, winning battles for them in times of war and framing laws for their government in times of peace. This was already the belief at the time of adoption of the Hammurabi code, which is represented as having been received by Hammurabi from the Babylonian God Shamash.

However, not all of the laws contained in the Pentateuch are of Mosaic origin. From time to time changes and modifications crept into their laws, the same as occurs in all countries. As the Hebrew nation grew older the exigencies of the times had to be met by the modification of the old or the introduction of new laws.

The Pentateuch contains a number of passages which plainly indicate that it was written or compiled subsequent to the time of Moses, its reputed author.

In Genesis 36:31 occurs this passage: "Before there reigned any king over the children of Israel." The use of this expression implies acquaintance with the fact that Israel became a monarchy. It very evidently must have been written subsequent to the time that the Israelites did have a king rule over them. Their first king was Saul. This passage, therefore, in place of having been written by Moses, must have been written during or after King Saul's time.

A number of years after the Israelites had taken possession of the land of Canaan, they changed the name of the city Laish to the name of Dan, as is stated in Judges 18:29. So there was no city by the name of Dan in the land of Canaan in the time of Moses, its name then was Laish, and yet we read in Genesis 14:14 that Abraham and his servants pursued a certain party "as far as Dan," plainly implying that it was written subsequent to the time that the name of the city was changed from Laish to Dan.

In Genesis 12:6 and again in Genesis 13:7 we find

this clause used, "And the Canaanite was then in the land." This also must have been written subsequent to the time of Moses, as the Canaanites had undisputed possession of the land so long as Moses lived. If Moses was its author, he evidently would have written "The land now occupied by the Canaanites."

In Genesis 20:7 Abraham is called a "nabi," meaning prophet, in the original text. In 1 Samuel 9:9 we are told that he that is now called a "nabi" was beforetime called a "roeh." The word "nabi," therefore, was not likely used until during, or subsequent to, the time of Samuel.

In Deuteronomy 1:1 we read: "These are the words which Moses spake unto all Israel beyond the Jordan in the wilderness." Beyond the Jordan is on the east of Jordan. The quoted passage implies an author on the west side of Jordan, but Moses never crossed the Jordan, as he never entered the promised land (Deut. 34:4), so he could not have written it and it must have been written by someone after Israel had entered Canaan.

In Deuteronomy 34:10, it is stated, "And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face." This evidently must also have been written long after the time of Moses.

The Book of Jasher contains poems whose authorship it attributes to David, also contains poems whose authorship it attributes to Solomon. The book evidently, therefore, could not have been written before the time of King Solomon. Yet the Book of Jasher is quoted in Joshua 10:13, thus plainly indi-

cating that the Book of Joshua, in place of having been written by Joshua, must have been written a long time afterward or after the time of King Solomon.

The Pentateuch, in place of having come to us thru divine revelation, bears strong evidence in its composition of being a compilation of earlier Hebrew records.

The Book of Genesis, more particularly, plainly indicates that its contents are made up of at least two distinct records, as almost every event given therein is doubly recorded. Thus do we find two distinct accounts of the Creation and two of the Deluge. Of the many other repetitions are the following: The promise of a son for Sarah, first in Genesis 17:16-19, and again in Genesis 18:9-15; the naming of Bethel by Jacob, first in Genesis 28:19 and again in Genesis 35:15; Jacob's name being changed to Israel, first in Genesis 22:28 and again in Genesis 35:10. Not only do we find repetitions, we also find discrepancies. The variances in the accounts of the Creation and of the Deluge have already been referred to. In Gen. 35:19 we are told of the death of Rachel and yet subsequently, or in Gen. 37:10, mention is made of her being alive. According to Gen. 35:18, 19, Benjamin was born at or near Bethlehem, according to Gen. 35:26 he was born at Paddan-aram. We find varying explanations of the name Bethel in Gen. 28:18, 19 and Gen. 35:14, 15, of the name Beer-sheba in Gen. 21:31 and Gen. 26:33, and of the name Israel in Gen. 32:28 and Gen. 35:10.

On the theory that the whole Book of Genesis was written by a single author, these repetitions and discrepancies are very hard to explain; but on the theory that in the Book of Genesis there are woven together different documents containing similar, but in some respects varying, accounts of the same narratives, then these repetitions and discrepancies can very readily be accounted for.

Another proof that the Book of Genesis is a compilation is furnished by the different names given to Deity in the original Hebrew text of Genesis. In some of the sentences or paragraphs of the original text He is named Jahveh and in others He is named Elohim. If those sentences in which He is named Jahveh are separated from the text and are strung together, they will make a fairly well connected account of nearly all the events narrated in Genesis, and the same is true of the sentences which designate the Deity by the name of Elohim. In these two parallel accounts running thru the Book of Genesis, the fact that the Deity is designated by the name of Elohim in the one and by the name of Jahveh in the other, strikingly suggests that originally they must have been separate documents and that Genesis is a compilation of both.

So sacred had these separate documents apparently become that even where they were at variance with one another, the compilers made little attempt to reconcile the differences but gave both virtually in their entirety. Thus, for example, is there a variance as to the duration of the Flood and another variance as to the number of animals which were taken by Noah into the ark, both of which have already been referred to.

Further proof that the Pentateuch is a compilation is the fact that the laws contained in it do not constitute a single uniform code of laws, but are made up of at least three different codes, which vary from one another and which plainly indicate successive stages of development. The first code undoubtedly was of Mosaic origin. A number of the laws in the Pentateuch are repeatedly unobserved or transgressed by pious men, who stand unrebuked, which makes it very evident that such laws could not yet have been in existence at the time of their unobservance. For example, the Deuteronomic law requires all sacrifices to be made at one central place, the place of the tabernacle or sanctuary, and expressly forbids the erection of altars for sacrifice anywhere else; yet Joshua, Samuel, David and others repeatedly erected altars at other places than the sanctuary. The law forbidding the erection of altars elsewhere than at the tabernacle must evidently have been adopted, not in Moses' time, but at a comparatively late period in Israel's history.

The compilation of the Pentateuch, and in fact of the larger part of the Old Testament, was made probably during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, or shortly after Israel's return to Palestine after the Captivity or Exile. They were then very eager to start out aright and manifested every intention strictly to conform to what they believed to be Jehovah's laws. Their records and literature must have become very much scattered during the fifty years of their exile, a portion of them no doubt having been destroyed with the destruction of the Temple. They now rebuilt the Temple and we

have reason to believe that they now gathered together all the well authenticated records of their people that they could find, and these were compiled into what now constitutes the earlier Books of the Old Testament.

During almost their entire history the Israelites were a grievously oppressed people. For a time they were slaves in Egypt. At no period except during the reigns of David and Solomon, were they in undisputed possession of Canaan or Palestine. There was an almost continuous warfare with varying success between them and neighboring tribes. After the brief period of prosperity under Kings David and Solomon, they began to quarrel and fight among themselves, the northern tribes under the name of Israel withdrawing from Judah. Many years of cruel civil war weakened them to such an extent that they fell an easy prey to neighboring nations, who again and again subdued them and compelled them to pay heavy tribute. Then they were carried off into captivity and for 50 years they lived in exile. Soon after the Restoration there followed the long period of their subjection to the Greeks, and then came the heavy Roman yoke.

With nations as well as with individuals we know that prosperity tends to promote worldliness and vice, while on the other hand adversity and affliction tend to discover and promote virtue and a deeply religious sense of feeling. It was very probably because of their many misfortunes and dire oppressions that the Hebrews became an intently religious people and soon surpassed contemporaneous nations

in spiritual advancement.[1] They gradually rid themselves of much of the grossness and crudity common to the religions of their neighbors. The tribal gods were largely regarded as territorial gods. It is not surprising therefore that the Hebrews at times fell to worshipping the gods of the country which they were occupying, the gods of Canaan. It was only for brief periods, however. The calamities that so often befell them came to be regarded as divine chastisement because of their forsaking Jehovah. There was no more turning to other gods after their return from captivity. From that time they worshipped Jehovah, and Jehovah only. A marked advance over other nations was made when they strictly prohibited image-worship. Another marked advance was made when they began to regard Jehovah not only as simply looking after the material welfare of his people, but as a God of righteousness. They preserved their race intact by strictly forbidding intermarriage with other tribes and by the faithful observance of certain ceremonial rites. By preserving their race intact they preserved their religion intact. Although the Jews as a whole regarded Jehovah as a tribal or national god even up to and including the time of Jesus, there now and then arose a great man among them who proclaimed Jehovah as not only the god of the Jews but as the God and Father of all mankind. It was because of its superiority and eminent fitness that the Hebrew religion survived and developed into the greatest and best of all religions, the Christian religion.

[1]Some writer has said: "The genius of the Hebrew nation was for religion, as the genius of Greece was for art, of Rome for law, and of England for commerce."

These then are our reasons, by way of summary, for believing that the Old Testament, in place of having come to us thru divine revelation, is a compilation of the early records of the Hebrew race, composed largely of traditions and legends. God could not have revealed himself to the Israelites for the reason that they always had an imperfect conception of Him, regarding Him as God of their own people only, to the exclusion of all other peoples. Divine revelation made to only a small minority would have been an act of injustice to the vast majority of the inhabitants of the earth. The Old Testament, and the Pentateuch more particularly, cannot have come from God because it in many aspects ascribes a low moral character to God. The Old Testament is mistaken in the age of the earth and of man. The account of the Creation is a didactic poem and not a historical narrative. It could not have been divinely revealed for it was not original with the Hebrews. It is impossible to believe that the all-knowing and unchangeable God should have grieved and repented that He had created man and that He should have destroyed by a deluge every human being on the face of the earth, save one man and his family. The story of the Deluge is full of impossibilities. The accounts of the Creation and of the Deluge contain a number of plain contradictions. If the numerous animal sacrifices practiced by the Israelites had been ordained and exacted of them by Jehovah, as is claimed in the Pentateuch, great men of Israel, such as Samuel, Isaiah, Hosea and Micah, would not have spoken disparagingly of these same sacrifices. Israel's laws,

in place of being of divine origin, were largely copied from and patterned after older laws that plainly were of human origin. Furthermore, not all the laws contained in the Pentateuch are of Mosaic origin as they do not constitute a uniform code of laws but are made up of three different codes, at least one of which was adopted by Israel long after the time of Moses. Many passages contained in the Pentateuch plainly indicate that it could not have been written by Moses but that it was composed or compiled at a period subsequent to the time of Moses. The Pentateuch bears strong internal evidence of its being a compilation of earlier Hebrew records.

The Origin of Man

There are only two theories as to the origin of man; either he owes his existence to a special act of creation, or he is a development from the higher order of animals.

The sole authority we have for the special creation theory, or the creation of man by Divine fiat, is the account of the Creation as given in the first two chapters of the Book of Genesis.

If the creation of the universe as narrated in Genesis is unhistoric, as we endeavored to prove in our previous article, if it simply constitutes a didactic poem, allegorical and legendary in character, then the creation of man by Divine fiat must likewise be unhistoric and legendary. It is part of the same poem.

The details incident to the creation of man and woman as narrated in Genesis make it a very unlikely and improbable story. Jehovah takes a small quantity of dust and moulds it into the form of a man. He blows his breath into his nostrils and man becomes a living soul. He places the man in a garden, the garden of Eden, located rather indefinitely by the term "eastward." In the garden Jehovah plants "every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food," and among them are "the tree of life" and "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." He causes a deep sleep to fall upon the man and while he sleeps He takes out of him one of his ribs and from the rib He makes woman. After the temptation and the fall, consequent upon their eat-

ing of the forbidden fruit of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," the man and the woman are driven out of the garden of Eden lest "they take also of the tree of life and eat and live *forever.*" The ground is cursed because of their disobedience. And there is placed at the entrance to the garden of Eden "the cherubim and the flame of a sword" for the avowed purpose of preventing anyone from entering and from acquiring immortality by eating of the tree of life. The tree of life certainly was not destroyed or it would not have been necessary to have it guarded by a flaming sword. What became of it? The whole story is figurative and allegorical on the face of it, and was not intended as a narrative of actually occurring events.

The greatest of sins is to do harm to a fellow man,—to defame him, to defraud him, to kill or do him other bodily injury. The sin that Adam and Eve are alleged to have committed, by eating of the forbidden fruit, is a very ordinary sin. They disobeyed, but they harmed no one but themselves. Many of us commit no less a sin—disobeying one of God's commands—almost every day of our lives. And yet for this sin, we are told, God cursed not only Adam and Eve but the whole human race down even to the present time. The punishment is so utterly out of proportion to the sin committed that our faith in the goodness and justice of God impels us to pronounce it false.

If there truly was a garden of Eden as it is pictured in the Book of Genesis, and there would have been no disobedience by our first parents, mankind would have always remained in a stagnant condition

as there was no incentive for progress. The story gives us an erroneous idea as to labor by pronouncing it a curse. In place of labor being a curse, it is a blessing and the only true source of progress.

The evident purpose of this allegorical tale was twofold, namely:

First.—To account for the innate depravity of man. What there is of human depravity in this world, however, has its origin not in the disobedience of our first parents but in the animal nature that still remains in man.

Second.—To reconcile the belief in a benevolent Creator with the much suffering and misery that exist in this world. Its purpose was to teach that all the woe and sin in this world are solely man's fault because of his disobedience. It is not difficult, however, to account for the evil and pain in this life without laying it to man's fault, nor is it difficult to reconcile them with our belief that God is benevolent. To have made man incapable of sin would be to make him incapable of virtue. This he must acquire for himself, by free choice, by struggle and conquest, else there can be no virtue. There can be no merit in being good unless evil exists. It is only by unceasing warfare with evil that we become strong, courageous and self-reliant. The discipline of pain is necessary to our good health; it serves as a signal, a warning, a beneficent guide. Sorrow is a wise moral teacher, and affliction is often a blessing. Not only is there sorrow in this life, there is also joy; not only is there pain, there is also pleasure; not only is there evil, there is also good. All of them are

very necessary, else there can be no progressive development.

That God should have made man full grown, in a minute we might say, does not at all conform with what we know of the Divine method. The earth, all scientists agree, was brought to its present form through a long process of development from original nebulae. The giant oak that looms heavenward and bids defiance to the storms grew from a little acorn. The individual, when he first sees the light, is a helpless babe and it takes years of growth before he attains the full stature and strength of manhood. In fact, all the handiwork of God that we see in the natural world around us, in place of having been brought into existence by Divine fiat, was made to go through a long process of making and developing before it reached its mature state. Nor was the first man brought into existence by Divine fiat. Analogy teaches us that he, too, went through a long process of development before he became a man.

What is the evidence that man has been evolved from the higher order of animals? There is the great resemblance in the bodily structure of man and of the higher order of animals. All the mental faculties of man are found in the animals in an incipient stage. And we have the testimony of palaeontology, of the rudimentary organs, and of embryology. We will take up each, in the order named.

1. The Resemblance in the Bodily Structure of Man and of the Higher Order of Animals.

Man is constructed on the same general plan as are all the other mammals. He does not possess a single organ which other mammals do not have. The eye, the ear, the mouth, the nostrils, the nerves, the muscles, the digestive organs, the veins, the arteries and the heart are not only found in all, but are constructed on the same general plan. The procreative organs and the process of procreation are very similar. Every single bone in man's body has a corresponding bone in the higher order of animals. Take for example man's arms, the fore-feet of a horse, the wings of a bird and even the fins of a fish, all are of the same structural formation, every bone in either one having a counterpart in all the rest. Sleep which rests and refreshes is common to all. Man is liable to receive from the lower animals, and to communicate to them, certain diseases. Man's blood cannot be distinguished from that of the anthropoid apes. Even man's brain cannot be distinguished from that of the higher order of mammals by its substance or shape, but only by its size and development.[1]

2. All the Mental Faculties of Man Are Found in the Animals in an Incipient Stage.

Many animals have excellent memories for persons and places. All animals manifestly enjoy ex-

[1]"To anyone who considers the structure of man's body, even in the most superficial manner, it must be evident that it is the body of an animal, differing greatly, it is true, from the bodies of all other animals, but agreeing with them in all essential features. The body structure of man classes him as a vertebrate; the mode of suckling classes him as a mammal; his blood, his muscles and his nerves, the structure of his heart with its veins and arteries, his lungs and his whole respiratory and circulatory systems, all closely correspond to those of other mammals and are often almost identical. His senses are identical with theirs and his organs of sense are the same in number and occupy the same relative position. . . . So it is improbable and almost inconceivable that man agreeing with them so closely in every detail of his structure, should have had some quite distinct mode of origin."—*Darwinism*, by Alfred Russell Wallace, Chap. 5.

citement, feel wonder, and may exhibit curiosity. Dogs, cats and horses have vivid dreams and thus must possess some power of imagination. They possess some power of self-command, as is shown by the pointer or setter dog in abstaining from rushing upon its prey. Horses and dogs often show much affection for their master. It is a feeling akin to sympathy that leads a dog to fly at anyone who strikes his master. Attention, a mental faculty the most important for the intellectual progress of man, is shown by a cat when it sits for a long time by a hole watching intently for a mouse to appear. In fact many carnivorous animals will hide behind brush or stone for hours watching for prey. Animals of many kinds are social and have a feeling of love for one another and sympathize with each other's distress or danger. The maternal affections are very strong in the females of many animals. Monkeys have been seen carefully to drive away the flies which bothered their infants, also to wash the faces of their young ones in a shallow stream. Some animals manifest grief. The grief of female monkeys for the loss of their young is very intense. A dog shows a trace of a conscience, for he possesses the sense of shame. Of all faculties of the human mind, reason stands at the head. There is no question that animals possess some power of reasoning. Animals may constantly be seen to pause, deliberate and resolve. Young animals can much easier be caught in traps than old animals. A monkey will use a stick as a lever. When an elephant is driven to a bridge he will pause and, if he does not think it safe to trust his weight to it, he cannot be made to cross

it. The impassable gulf between man and the animals is an illusion. The intelligence we see in animals is the very root of all that is developed in the mind of man. There is not a single mental faculty of man that is not found in an incipient stage in the higher order of animals. There is of course a vast difference between the mind of a man and the mind of an animal, but it is a difference, not of kind, only in degree. As was stated by Professor Huxley, the naturalist, there is not any more difference between the mind of a savage and that of one of the higher order of animals than there is between the mind of a savage and that of a man civilized and educated.

3. The Testimony of Palaeontology.

The successive formations or strata of the earth's surface are like the pages of a book and reveal to us a fairly complete history of the different forms of life on our planet. The fossil remains found imbedded in the stratified rocks conclusively show that life on earth began in its very simplest forms. In subsequent strata these simple and primitive forms become modified and gradually become more complex. Now and then a certain species is found to become extinct and does not subsequently appear, but a new and improved species takes its place. The newer or later the rock the more complex and improved are the different forms of life found imbedded in it. The vertebrate animals do not appear until after the invertebrates. The mammals appear subsequent to other vertebrates. The fossil remains of man and of the tools and weapons used by man appear last of all. This slow and steady progression

of animal life, as revealed by the stratified rocks, plainly indicates that the next higher order of animals must have been a development from the order just below it, and that this development from lower to higher continued from the very lowest and simplest through the entire graduated scale of life until man was reached.

4. Rudimentary Organs.

Our bodies contain traces of organs now useless to us and no longer able to perform any function, but which are of constant use and are fully developed in different animals. Horses, dogs and hares, for example, point their ears and move them in different directions. Man has in his ears all the necessary muscles for doing the very same, but from long disuse of these muscles he is now incapable of pointing or moving his ears. Why should these muscles be found in man? He has never used them. Their presence in our ears cannot be accounted for in any other way than that we inherited them from our animal ancestors. Many species of dogs and rabbits under the influence of civilized life have long ceased pricking up their ears, thereby acquiring loosely-hanging ears, and as a consequence their auricular muscles have become rudimentary also. Some men can move and twitch the scalps of their heads. Many apes and monkeys can do the same. Other animals can move and twitch the skin over their entire body and this power is of great use to them. The appendix, so often causing appendicitis, is rudimentary in man. It is much larger in our plant-eating animals and with them performs a very useful function. Man

possesses distinct bones of a tail underneath his skin. These organs, now rudimentary in us, were quite useful to our animal ancestors, who therefore possessed them in a perfect state. Under changed habits of life they became rudimentary from disuse in their descendants. Are they not an unmistakable indication of our animal ancestry, else why should we have them? Some one has aptly compared these rudimentary organs in man to the silent letters we find in many of our words. Although they are not used in the pronunciation, they usually help to reveal the origin of the word.

5. Embryology.

The science of embryology traces the development of man from the time of his conception to the time of his birth, and this growth and development of the babe while yet unborn furnishes one of the most marvelous chapters in biology or study of human life. Every child in the course of its growth before birth passes through every phase of animal life, from the lowest to the highest. By virtue of the force of hereditary habit, so to speak, the unborn child treads the same path which its animal ancestors followed from the unicellular condition to their present point of development, and not only man but all the higher order of animals show their ancestral origin in their embryonic life.

Life begins with the ovum, a small spheroid of protoplasm. This germ is so exactly alike in all the animals and man, that even the microscope fails to trace any difference. The germ or embryo begins with a single cell. It grows, as do the lowest forms

of life, by continually adding additional cells. In time these cells separate themselves into different parts or segments, and from these segments originate the different organs of the body.

The human form does not begin as a human form. It begins as an animal and for a long time there is nothing in it wearing the remotest resemblance to humanity. What meets the eye, as its growth progresses, is a vast procession of lower forms of life. For some time it cannot be discriminated from that of the very lowest order of animals. For a still longer period it resembles the embryo of all other vertebrate animals, not merely in outward form but in all essentials of structure, and not until in its very last stages of development does the human embryo differ from that of the anthropoid apes.

The remarkable strength of an infant in its fingers is a relic brought with it from its ape ancestry, who acquired the strength from climbing trees. That the ancient progenitors of man once lived an aquatic life is shown by the ear, which as shown in its embryo state is a development of the first gill cleft and its surrounding parts. There is in man still a relic of the tail, which at a certain period in its embryonic life is as prominent in man as it is in any other vertebrate. The six-months-old human embryo is covered with fine wool-like hair all over the body except on palms of hand and soles of feet. Thus man in his embryonic life shows traces of his animal origin that cannot be misinterpreted. While yet unborn he passes through the entire scale of human life. On

no other theory can we account for it than that he has been evolved from the higher order of animals.[1]

In the development of plant and animal life we observe four great truths or fundamental principles: *First,* the tendency of every species of plant and animal to multiply in geometrical ratio. *Second,* a continuous struggle for existence. *Third,* the tendency of the offspring to inherit qualities from their parents, called the law of heredity. *Fourth,* the offspring are never exactly alike, called the law of variation. We will briefly consider them in the order named.

First. The tendency of every species of plant and animal to multiply in geometrical ratio. We all know how very prolific in seeds nearly all plants are and how rapidly they multiply, if conditions are at all favorable for the seeds to sprout and to grow. Any ordinary bird, like the robin or blackbird, will lay on an average ten eggs a year. If a single pair of robins or blackbirds were placed on an island and were there allowed to breed unmolested by other animals, with plenty of food and in a favorable climate, the increase from this single pair in ten years' time would amount to more than twenty million birds. Even the larger animals, which breed comparatively slowly, increase enormously when placed under favorable conditions. Columbus in his second voyage to America left a few black cattle at St. Domingo and these ran wild and increased in num-

[1]The above data on embryology have been obtained from the following works: "The Descent or Origin of Man," by Chas. Darwin; "The Evolution of Man," by Prof. Haeckel; "The Ascent of Man," by Henry Drummond; "The Whence and the Whither," by John M. Tyler; "In the Beginning," by T. Guilbert.

ber so rapidly that 27 years afterward there were found four herds of them having from 4,000 to 8,000 in each herd. The elephant produces young only about once in ten years, generally only one at a birth. Mr. Darwin estimated that the progeny of a single pair of elephants after the lapse of 750 years would number about 19 million.

Second. The continuous struggle for existence. This tendency in both plants and animals enormously to increase in numbers, is largely prevented by the great struggle for existence that is constantly going on. Every individual plant and animal is exposed to a continuous succession of perils from the time of birth till it succumbs in death. All the plants of a country are at war with each other, each one struggling to occupy ground at the expense of its neighbor. If weeds are allowed to grow unchecked in a field or garden, they will in time choke out and destroy the plants under cultivation. Besides the direct competition among plants themselves, they are liable to be destroyed by the action of the elements in the form of droughts or floods, frosts or excessive heat. Almost all plants, too, are under constant exposure to destruction by animals. The birds destroy the buds, the caterpillars the leaves, the weevil the seeds, the wireworms the roots, and the very greatest destroyers of plant life are the herbivorous animals.

In animals it is the eggs or the very young that suffer the most from their various enemies. There is an incessant war against insects by insectivorous birds and reptiles, as well as by other insects. Great

destroyers of all kinds of animals are excessive cold, famine and floods. The carnivorous animals constantly feed upon and destroy not only the herbivorous animals, but other carnivorous animals. There is a constant and daily search after food, the failure to obtain which means weakness or starvation; and there is a constant effort to escape destruction by enemies, failure in which means death. The strenuous struggle for existence never ceases, on the part of both plants and animals.

Third. The Law of Heredity. The offspring is always substantially like its parents. Any peculiarity of the parents will likely appear in their progeny. We have inherited from our parents peculiarities of form, of size, of complexion, color of hair, and susceptibility to particular diseases. Even peculiar mental and moral traits of the parent are likely to appear in the offspring.

Fourth. The Law of Variation. While the offspring is in the main like the parents, in some particulars there is always a difference, so that the offspring is never in all respects just like the parents. No two children in the same family are exactly alike. The same is true of animals. In each litter of kittens or puppies, even when alike in color, differences of some kind can always be discovered on close observation, as difference in size, in proportion of their bodies and limbs, in length and texture of hair, and in disposition. Each possesses an individual countenance of its own almost as varied, when closely studied, as that of a human being. Good shepherds usually recognize and distinguish almost every mem-

ber of their flocks. We find just as much of a variety in the vegetable kingdom. "In every bed of flowers or of vegetables we shall find, if we look closely, that there are countless small differences, in the size, in the mode of growth, in the shape or color of the leaves, in the form, color, or markings of the flowers, or in the size, form, color or flavor of the fruit."[1]

It is on these four fundamental truths—the tendency in plants and animals to multiply in geometrical ratio, the constant struggle for life, the law of variation and the law of heredity—that Darwin based his great theory of natural selection, whereby to account for the gradual development of an existing order of plants or animals into a higher order of plants or animals, or for the creation of new species.

If there were nothing to check the great tendency in plants and animals rapidly to multiply in number, the world soon would not be able to hold and support them all. A constant struggle for existence inevitably follows, because of this high rate of increase in all organic beings. There are many rivals living upon the same kind of food, causing relentless and never-ceasing competition. All of our carnivorous animals are constantly preying upon other animals, necessitating their keeping on constant guard for fear of being devoured. Even seemingly harmless creatures like our smaller birds are continually destroying life—seed and insects. Much life, too, is destroyed by famine, flood, and excessive cold or heat. So that every individual, of animal or plant, is exposed to a continuous series of perils along the whole course of its existence.

[1] *"Darwinism,"* by Alfred Russel Wallace, Chap. 4.

By virtue of the law of variation—no two individuals of any species being exactly alike—it is very obvious that some individuals in every generation will be better adapted than others to conquer in the great struggle for life. They may be protected against extreme cold by a warmer coat of fur or feathers, they may be able by greater strength or greater cunning to secure food, they may have longer necks to reach food on trees, they may escape from carnivorous animals by greater swiftness or be able to hide from them more successfully by a modification in color of the outside of their body, rendering them less conspicuous, or they may be able to repel their attack by greater strength or courage. If in any way any individuals of a certain species become possessed of certain variations which render them better adapted for success in the struggle for life, these individuals—by virtue of the survival of the fittest—will likely survive to maturity and will therefore have the opportunity to propagate their species. They will be *naturally selected* to breed the coming generation. And by virtue of the law of heredity their offspring will inherit, in greater or less degree, those favorable peculiarities or variations which have given the parents victory in the great struggle for life. Whenever it occurs that from generation to generation, which may extend over centuries, there is a constant and progressive accumulation of these small variations, all tending in one direction, the offspring will then in time become so entirely different from the original parents that they will constitute the beginning of a new and distinct species.

What takes place in nature, and what Darwin calls Natural Selection, man does in a measure likewise accomplish by what is called artificial selection. If he desires beef cattle, he will select the heaviest he has for breeding; if he desires dairy cattle, he will select for breeding those that yield the largest quantity and richest quality of milk. It is by the repeated selection of any desired variation or group of variations, that our fine sorts of flowers, fruits and vegetables have been obtained. It is in this way that we have secured our choice breeds of cattle—the Herefords, the Holsteins, etc.—and our choice breeds of poultry—the Leghorns, the Wyandottes, etc. And it is in this way that we have secured our heavy ponderous draft horses, our wonderfully swift race horses, and our numerous varieties of dogs and of pigeons.

It is a quite common belief that this improvement in our cultivated plants and in our domestic animals is due to crossing, but this is an altogether mistaken idea. It is true, crossing is sometimes resorted to in order to obtain a combination of qualities found in two distinct breeds, or to increase the constitutional vigor, but it is used for no other purpose. Any horticulturist or breeder of cattle or of poultry well knows that crossing leads to instability of character, and it is therefore seldom used in producing fixed and well-marked races. "Purity of breed, with repeated selection of the best varieties of that breed, is the foundation of all improvement in our domestic animals and cultivated plants."[1]

[1] "Darwinism," by Alfred Russel Wallace, Chap. 4.

An objection sometimes raised against the evolution theory is that a new and distinct species of plants or animals has never yet within man's actual experience been produced either by natural or artificial selection. Man has been able to produce a great variety, for example, of pigeons or of dogs, but they are still pigeons, they are still dogs, and no new species have resulted. Nor have we, it is said, seen any new species of wild animals or of uncultivated plants appear in the natural world. This may be true, but we must remember that the historic period of man in this world has been very short indeed when compared with the age of life on our planet, and, furthermore that during the short period that we have any written record of life on earth, the physical environment has been comparatively stable. It was not always so. There was a time within our earth's existence when tremendous changes were constantly taking place. What vast modifications in the physical environment must have taken place, for example, during what is known as the glacial age, and it was during one of the glacial epochs that man is believed to have first appeared on earth. How wonderfully luxuriant must all vegetation have grown during another epoch in our world's history when our vast coal beds were formed, and of what mammoth form were many of the animals of that period. There was a time when large portions of our continents, Europe, Asia and America, constituted the bottoms of oceans, and portions of what are now covered by ocean were once high and dry land. These great climatic and geographic changes must naturally have been accompanied by great and

corresponding modifications in all kinds of life on the globe. It was during this long unsettled and ever-changing period, it is believed, that the wonderful development in living forms took place, beginning with the very lowest and gradually rising in the scale until man was reached. After the physical features of our globe's surface became in a great measure fixed and settled, then the environment of all forms of life became comparatively stable and no evolution of new species may have resulted. There has been wonderful development since then, but it has been mainly along psychical, and not physical, lines.

We are sometimes told that variations in animals or plants always are small in amount and that, instead of being cumulative from generation to generation, they again gradually disappear by promiscuous crossing with other individuals of the same species which do not possess the variations in question. Variations certainly cannot well become cumulative when those possessed of the variations do not become separated from the common stock. But during the time that our earth was subject to great geographical changes, how often must it have occurred that small groups of animals or plants became separated from the parent stock by the rise of mountain ranges or by a strip of land between them becoming submerged. Small groups of animals were also undoubtedly continually separating themselves from the main body of their species by voluntary migration to a higher or lower altitude or into a more dry or wet district.

Small groups therefore must repeatedly have be-

come separated from the parent stock, and by reason of the change they were no longer in harmony with their environment. A geographical change is most always accompanied by a change of climate, a change in food, and a change in the habits and modes of life. There will also be competition with new rivals and exposure to attack from new enemies. In the constant effort necessarily made to adapt themselves to their new environment, whatever variations appear that give the possessors of them an adantage in the struggle for life will cause them to survive, while the rest will gradually die out. The group in which they appear being cut off from the parent stock, not only once but a number of times at successive stages of development, these variations will become cumulative from generation to generation for long periods of time, and in this way it is very probable that new and distinct species have been formed. It is well to bear in mind also that forms of life at an early period were naturally more plastic than they are now, also that a change brought about in only one organ of the body, by virtue of the laws of correlation, will tend to produce marked and corresponding changes in the other organs of the body.

Natural selection is not always a progressive force. It may oftentimes become a conservative force. For instance, if a certain species has become substantially adapted to its environment, then there is no need of a change and whatever variations appear in certain individuals of the species will likely be injurious. In such cases natural selection will act as a conservative force. All variations that appear, which diverge widely from the parent stock,

will be stamped out by reason of their being injurious, and the species, in place of changing, will keep true from generation to generation to its specific character. This is the principal reason why many of the lower forms of life still exist to this day.

The order of animals the most nearly allied to man are the anthropoid apes. There are four distinct kinds of anthropoids: the Gibbons, the Orangutans, the Chimpanzees and the Gorillas.[1] All of them have the same number of teeth as man. Their arms are always longer than their legs. Their long arms they probably acquired by climbing trees and by gathering food from limbs to which they could not trust their weight. Their hands are provided with longer or shorter thumbs. The great toe of the foot is always smaller than in man and can be opposed, like the thumbs, to the rest of the foot. None of them have tails.

The Gibbons are found scattered over the islands of Java, Sumatra and Borneo and in Malacca, Siam and parts of Hindoostan. They average 3 feet in height. All day long they haunt the tops of tall trees. They possess a prodigious volume of voice. They readily take to the erect posture. The females carry their young to the waterside and there wash their faces, in spite of resistance and cries. They usually drink by dipping their fingers in water and then licking them. They are very tricky and pettish, and yet not devoid of a certain conscience.

The Orangutan are found in the low flat plains and dense forests of Sumatra and Borneo. They

[1]The data here given relative to the anthropoid apes have been taken from "Man's Place in Nature," by Prof. Thomas H. Huxley.

average 4 feet in height and often attain an age of 50 years. The young are of slow growth and remain unusually long under their mother's protection. The females are not adults until 15 years of age. They build rude huts in trees—not much more than a nest. They go to bed at about 5 o'clock and get up at about 9. When the night is cold they cover themselves with green leaves. The bones of the pelvis are not expanded like those of other apes, but are more like those of man. When they walk or run, their very long arms are but little bent, thus giving them an almost erect posture. Their food consists principally of figs, blossoms and young leaves. They are very wild and sly, sluggish and melancholy, and they possess an immense strength. When approached they endeavor to hide or escape along the topmost branches of the trees, breaking off and throwing down the boughs as they proceed. Their hearing is very acute and they have considerable intelligence. Some of them possess a rudimentary nail on the great toe. In the crania of these individuals we find remarkable difference of form, proportion and dimension, no two being exactly alike.

The Chimpanzee are found in Western Africa. They are under 5 feet in height. Their natural position is on all fours, though they are sometimes seen to stand and to walk. They are very filthy in their habits, but manifest much intelligence. When shot at and wounded they give a sudden screech, not unlike that of a human being in sudden and acute distress, and they have been seen to apply leaves and grass to the wound to stop the flow of blood.

The Gorilla inhabits the interior of Lower Guinea.

Its average height is 5 feet and average weight 145 pounds. It is thickly covered with coarse black hair, but the skin of the face and ears is naked and of a dark brown color. Its hair becomes gray with age—has large eyes, broad and flat nose, and prominent lips and chin. It has a crest of hair on the head and has the power of moving the scalp forward and back. The neck is short, thick and hairy, and the chest and shoulders are very broad. The Gorilla is much inclined to assume the erect posture, though it stoops or bends forward considerably, and its gait is shuffling. Their rude huts are made of sticks of wood and leafy branches and are supported by the crotches and limbs of trees. They afford little shelter and are occupied only at night. They live in bands. The females much outnumber the males, and there is but one adult male in each band. When the young males grow up, a contest takes place for mastery and the strongest, by killing and driving out the others, establishes himself as the head of the community. They are very ferocious, never running away from man as does the Chimpanzee. When the male sees a supposed enemy approach, he gives a terrific yell, which causes the females and the young quickly to disappear, and he then approaches the enemy in great fury, pouring out his horrid cries in quick succession. He is much better adapted for the erect posture than are the other anthropoids, and he always assumes an erect posture when making an attack.

The anthropoid which comes the nearest to man is the Gorilla. He has the same number of vertebrae in his spinal column as has man, the same number

and kind of teeth, often assumes the erect posture, and has no tail. In fact, the structural differences which separate man from the Gorilla are not so great as those which separate the Gorilla from the lower apes. It is true, in the size and shape of the skull there is a large difference between man and the Gorilla. The capacity of no human cranium is less than 62 cubic inches, while no Gorilla has over 35 cubic inches. However, there is even a greater difference in the volume of the cranial cavity of the different races of mankind. The largest human skull that has been measured contained 114 cubic inches and the smallest 62 cubic inches. So that even in the important matter of cranial capacity men differ more widely from one another than they do from the anthropoid apes.

Man's ancestors very probably either sprang from one of the anthropoids above named, or constituted a collateral branch which, together with the other anthropoids, all came from the same family stock.

Three things very probably occurred before man appeared: His immediate ancestors must have become isolated from the parent stock; they must have become subjected to considerable of a change in environment, and the change was from a milder to a colder and more vigorous climate.

Our ancestral group became separated from the parent stock either by voluntary migration or by reason of a sudden change in the earth's surface, which was of common occurrence during the glacial period. They were subjected to great change of environment by going either farther north or into a

higher altitude. All life being more vigorous in a cold climate, it became a harder task for our ancestral group to defend themselves from enemies, and they themselves in time became of more vigorous constitution. Food being not as plenty in a cold as in a tropical climate, nor as easy to acquire, it constantly exercised what mental faculties they possessed to obtain their daily sustenance. While they were vigorously endeavoring to adapt themselves to their new environment, natural selection with them became a decidedly progressive force. All such variations appearing from time to time, which gave the possessors an advantage in the constant struggle for life, were naturally preserved and were transmitted by the possessors of them to their descendants. All those who were unable to adapt themselves to the change of environment—and probably successive changes of environment—gradually died off, leaving no descendants. The conditions were such that the variations which were advantageous became cumulative from generation to generation and their progressive development was constant and continuous.

The parent stock from which our ancestral group became isolated were subjected to no great change and remained substantially in harmony with their environment. Variations were of no particular advantage and therefore natural selection with them was, not a progressive, but a conservative force. For this reason anthropoids still exist to this day, although they are not very numerous.

One of the great factors which started our ancestral group on its wonderful career of progress, was

the development of the hand. It was by reason of their living mostly in trees that they came to make a difference between their two pairs of limbs, the forefeet and the hindfeet. The forefeet they began to use for grasping and handling and the hindfeet for support of the body. The forefeet, thus largely set free from the work of support and locomotion, gradually became a tool-using organ. The first tool or weapon used was the broken branch of a tree. It was the father of all clubs. The blunt stick led to the pointed stick, the club to the spear. The differentiation of the two pairs of limbs, the development of the forefeet into the hands, introduced a change the importance of which we cannot well overestimate. The hand as a tactile tool-using organ became the servant of the brain for trying all kinds of experiments and kept the mental faculties constantly active. Its influence in developing the brain must have been very great.

Another important factor in our ancestors' progress was the acquirement of the habit of standing erect. One can best use the club by standing erect, and we may well believe that they had much use for the club, as their enemies were superior in vigor and their food more difficult to obtain that had been the case before they became isolated from the parent stock. Even while they were simply on the lookout for enemies and for food, they found the erect posture a great advantage.

The erect posture enabled the hands to be devoted entirely to prehension, which formerly had largely been the work of the jaws, and this caused a gradual change in the jaw and teeth and consequently in the

entire formation of the face. "Man undoubtedly owes his heaven-erected face to the struggle for life."

The assumption of the upright posture brought on a number of very important changes in other parts of the body, more particularly in the vertebral column, from the head down to the girdle of the pelvis. It enlarged the head, it enlarged and broadened out the chest and the shoulders, gave better breathing power, and was the means of progressively developing that important organ of speech, the larynx.

The development and the gradual perfecting of the larynx soon caused man far to outstrip his animal ancestors, for it made him capable of modulating and articulating his voice and speech. Traces of language are already found in the animals. All social animals communicate to one another very simple thoughts or perceptions. An illustration of this are the calls and warning cries of mammals and of birds. Who has not heard a hen, when a hawk flies overhead, give a warning cry to her little chicks who in consequence quickly run and hide under her wings. Dogs and horses will beg for food.. But the language of animals is simply disjointed calls or cries. It was not until our ancestors, by reason of their erect posture, had acquired a fully developed larynx that they were able to articulate their words. At first they probably named only a few familiar objects. The next step was the naming of a few familiar qualities, as hot, cold, sweet, sour, and so on. Then they came to connect the name of an object with the name of a quality, as the sun is hot, the apple is sour, and in this way they acquired the

power of predicating and of forming sentences. We still have savages, the Bushmen for example, whose vocabulary does not extend beyond the names of the most familiar objects and of the most familiar qualities, and who cannot count beyond three, having no names for any number beyond "three."

The use of language, crude as it no doubt was for a great many years, must have exerted a tremendous influence in the evolution of the human race. Prior to the use of language whatever gain was made in man's development could be transmitted to the succeeding generation only by heredity, but now all the knowledge and experience of the older generation could be transmitted to the younger through the use of language. Its influence also in improving and developing the mind must have been very great.

The gradual lengthening of the plastic period of infancy, or of the period when parental care is needed, was still another great factor that materially helped in the progress made by our ancestors. In the lower and simpler forms of animal life the offspring come into this world at once fully equipped for the battle of life. The snapping turtle, for example, snaps with decisive vigor the moment it is born. There is no such thing as infancy in the lower orders of life. But as the nervous system and other organisms become more complex and as the individual experience becomes more varied and a higher degree of intelligence is needed, there is not sufficient time during the embryo state for the young to emerge therefrom fully equipped, and they come into the world to a large extent helpless annd dependent on a mother's care. At the same time its intelligence

is far more plastic and it is more teachable, than is the case with the lower animal that has no babyhood.

Parental care began with the warm-blooded birds and with the mammals. With the lower mammals the infancy period is comparatively short and it gradually lengthens until man is reached. With the lengthening of infancy, the period of maternal help and watchfulness lengthens correspondingly. With the mother of man maternal affection has become a permanent part of her nature, lasting all through life. The lengthened period of infancy and of parental affection gave rise to the family and to the permanency of the marital relation. Permanent marriage, however, exists only to a degree among savages. Strict monogamy is a comparatively late achievement of civilization.[1]

The prolonged duration of infancy, together with the use of language, must now have been of incalculable benefit to the growing youth. By the time he reaches mature years he has acquired from the parents the full benefit of their life-long experience.

The greatest factor of all in the progress made by our ancestors was the increase of intelligence or the development of the mind.

The mind started on its wonderful career of development the moment the hand began to be used as a tool-using organ. The mental faculties were now being constantly exercised and developed, first in the use of the club and later in the use of rude tools and implements made of rough stone, relics of which are still found imbedded in the stratified

[1] "Through Nature To God," by John Fiske, page 99.

rocks. It was by chipping flint stones undoubtedly that they first discovered how to make a fire. As they gradually became more proficient in the use of tools and weapons, they were better enabled to protect themselves from their enemies and to provide themselves with sufficient food for their sustenance. New situations were continually arising which taxed and tended to develop their intellectual powers. In time they learned to use the skins of animals for clothing and to cover themselves with at night. They built for themselves strong, rude huts to live in, which protected them from the attacks of enemies and from the inclemencies of the weather.

These, then, were the evolutionary forces or factors which actively co-operated together to push our ancestral race onward and upward: The differentiation of the two pairs of limbs, the hands and the feet; the development of the hand by which it became a tool-using organ and the servant of the brain; the erect posture; the development of the larynx, articulate speech and the use of language; prolonged infancy and parental affection; and the increase of intelligence and development of the mind.

One factor set another in operation which in turn reacted upon the first. The co-operation of all was very essential to produce man. Had a single one failed, the result probably would have been different.

With gradual improvements in their weapons and gradually acquired skill in the use of them, and with gradually improved and better protected abodes to live in, there approached the important epoch when

our ancestors began to obtain mastery and dominion over all other animals.

With a better and more constant supply of suitable food, and with suitable clothing and shelter to protect themselves from the inclemencies of the weather, they could now better adapt themselves to the changing universe and keep more in harmony with their environment, and there was no particular need of further improvement in man's physical type of body. Our ancestors now began to sustain themselves and improve their condition, not so much by any physical characteristic, as by mental exercise of skill and craft. A new and greater act was thus opening in the drama of life.

The all important epoch was reached when man's evolution was striking an entirely new path. Having in a large measure acquired dominion over all other animals and having by means of clothing and shelter and much improved methods of obtaining his food substantially adapted himself to his environment, and there being consequently no particular need of further improvement in his physical body, the development of the mind from now on in a very large measure took the place of the development of the body. Natural selection was now taking advantage of every psychical or mental variation in our ancestral family and was making little change in the physical body except so far as to aid in the general advancement along intellectual lines. The great chasm thus gradually appeared that divides man from the lower animals.

Since that new departure, when development of body was largely superseded by development of

mind, our Creator's chief purpose very manifestly has been, not in bringing forth or developing a new and higher type of physical body, a new and higher species, but in expanding and perfecting the psychical attributes of the one creature in whose life those attributes had begun to acquire predominance. Thus in the long series of organic beings Man is the last. When this masterpiece was once reached in the evolution of life, nothing more could be done than to perfect it.

Miracles

A miracle is evidence of superhuman effort. It not alone excites wonder, it is an effect which cannot possibly result from natural causes. The telephone, the phonograph, the wireless message and all other late-day wonders have been brought about in full accord with and by virtue of the operation of natural laws, but a miracle transcends the power of all natural agencies and requires a special act and manifestation of Divine power.

He who has created all that exists and who rules the universe, undoubtedly has the power to do miracles. We know, however, that the universe is governed by certain and fixed laws. So far as our experience extends the Almighty never acts arbitrarily, never deviates from these laws. All that He does is in strict accord with and a direct result from the operation of the fundamental laws He has ordained. A miracle in its nature not resulting from natural causes, is contrary to all that we know of God's ways and methods. There is therefore a strong presumption against them, and before we can place belief in the miracles of the Bible we are justified in requiring that this presumption against them be overcome by the strongest kind of proof.

What proof have we that Jesus of Nazareth wrought miracles? If he came with a divine message to the people not only of his own time but of all future ages, and authenticated this message with miracles, it is natural to expect that in order to avoid

all doubt and dispute that might arise in future years, he certainly would have taken the precaution to have the message and the miracles carefully preserved by having written records made of them. The universal experience is that whatever a person may say or do is liable to be misinterpreted and misconstrued unless it is at once reduced to writing. But no written record was made of the Nazarene's teachings and alleged miracles during his lifetime, nor for many years afterward. For at least thirty years they were dependent for preservation on nothing more than the memory of a few witnesses. It is questionable whether the evidence of a single eye-witness can be furnished in their support. They are dependent for proof very largely if not altogether on hearsay testimony. Can this kind of proof be deemed sufficient to overcome the strong presumption that exists against them?

Why did not Jesus have written records made so that future generations could have no doubt as to what he said or did, and why was no written record of his life and teachings made by his disciples immediately after his death? It was because he and his disciples fully believed that the end of the world was very near. According to Matthew the very first words of his message were, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." That he was of the firm conviction that the world would soon come to an end is very evident from his words as given in Matthew 16:27, 28: "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then shall He render unto every man according to his deeds. Verily I say unto you, there are some

of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." Such being the belief of the Nazarene, he saw no need of leaving a written record of his teachings and miracles. There would be no future generations to leave them to.

It is a very singular fact that the age of miracles was an age of much superstition and that as man became more enlightened the miracles ceased. During and prior to the time of Jesus there seemed nothing unreasonable about a miracle. It was then not known that the universe was governed by fixed laws and orderly processes, and little distinction was made between the natural and the supernatural. All of the early religions, save the Confucian, abounded in miracles. The gospels of the New Testament speak of others besides Jesus and his disciples, who are alleged to have performed miracles. (Mark 9:38-40; Luke 9:49, 50; Matthew 7:22.) It was a credulous and superstitious age and the belief in all kinds of omens, charms and miraculous signs was well nigh universal. Occult influences were believed to be all of the time at work even in the common everyday affairs of life shaping the lives and destinies of men. Miracles did not cease with the deaths of Jesus and his disciples. In the writings of the Holy Fathers of the Church we frequently read of them as having occurred for centuries afterward. For example, two monks living in the fifth century after Christ, Hilarion and Paul by name, are said to have performed many miracles fully as wonderful as those attributed to Jesus, as is stated in the biographies of the two monks written by Jerome, one of the saints

of the Church. When did miracles cease? They gradually ceased as superstition waned and people became more enlightened. One of the factors that caused them to cease were the wonderful discoveries made by Copernicus, Galileo and Kepler. The representatives of the church realizing that these startling discoveries would greatly jeopardize the faith in miracles, condemned the discoverers in severe terms. When Copernicus proclaimed that the earth revolved around the sun, and not the sun around the earth, Martin Luther denounced him in these words:

"People give ear to an upstart astrologer who strove to show that the earth revolves, not the heavens or the firmament, the sun or the moon. Whoever wishes to appear clever must devise some new system, which of all systems is of course the very best. This fool wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy, but Sacred Scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and not the earth."

And at about the same time the Holy Inquisition made the following pronunciamento:

"The first proposition that the sun is the center and does not revolve around the earth is foolish, absurd, false in theology, and heretical, because expressly contrary to Holy Scripture; and the second proposition that the earth is not the center, but revolves about the sun, is absurd, false in philosophy and, from a theological point of view, opposed to the true faith."

If the Almighty gave men power to perform miracles through all the ages down to a comparatively recent period, why does He not do so still? There

never was as much sincere doubt and unbelief as there is now. There never was as much earnest seeking after the truth. In our religious creeds and dogmas are embodied a number of tenets which many of our most reasonable and intelligent minds cannot sanction. There is a great falling away from the so-called orthodox faith. Its opponents are carrying one position after another. Miracles that are so extensively denied as the figments of a barbarous and superstitious age, would accomplish an incalculable amount of good at this very time in support of the Faith now in such jeopardy.

However, if it is God's purpose to have man work out his own salvation, unaided save by the reasoning faculty with which He has endowed him and by the unmistakable manifestations of the uniform and unchangeable laws governing the universe, then we may well believe that He has not manifested Himself thru miracles and theophanies in any former age, and that He will not do so now in the present crisis.

The Gospel miracles, if they actually occurred, failed in accomplishing the purpose for which they were intended. Their avowed purpose was to authenticate the Nazarene's divine mission and message to the world. The very wonderful miracles he is alleged to have wrought proved so futile, however, that the very people for whose benefit they were wrought, believed him an imposter and crucified him. His disciples who we are told also performed miracles were likewise persecuted and slain. The miracles were of no assistance in spreading the Christian faith. The alleged raising of Lazarus after he had been buried for four days, and the al-

leged raising of many from their graves at the time of the crucifixion, had so little influence with the Jews that in a few generations' time there were no Jewish Christians to be found. All of them had become apostate, had gone back to their original faith. If the many wonderful miracles that are mentioned in the Gospels had actually been wrought, they would undoubtedly have been sufficient to convert the whole Jewish world to Christianity for all time.

For several generations the Christian converts in the Gentile world were very few in number and these very largely belonged to the lowest classes of society. When Christianity began to spread among the Gentiles it was not because of the miracles alleged to have been wrought in distant Palestine, but because of the great merit they found in the teachings and life of Jesus, and in the teachings and life of Paul.

Several of the miracles as recorded in the Gospels themselves furnish strong evidence of their improbability.

The changing of water into wine at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee is so directly contrary to all that Jesus taught that it is unbelievable. The Gospels plainly imply that Jesus never performed a miracle except only where it supplied an urgent and worthy need or want. Simply to furnish additional pleasure to a company of feasters cannot have supplied a very urgent need.

But the miracle is objectionable not only on the ground of utility, it is also objectionable on the ground of fitness. The feasters had already "drunk

freely" when the additional wine was furnished by the alleged miracle. No evil has cursed mankind as much as the evil of intemperance. Jesus always strongly condemned intemperance and it is impossible for us to believe that he performed a miracle the direct purpose of which was to promote immoderation in drinking.

So objectionable is this miracle in all its aspects that ministers of the Gospel frequently claim that the wine furnished for the marriage feast was not wine, but grape juice. Even this does not do away with the objection on the ground of utility, but was it unfermented? So long as it is unfermented it isn't wine, it is nothing more than grape juice. That it was fermented wine is necessarily implied from the remark said to have been made by the ruler of the feast. "Every man," he said, "setteth on first the good wine, and when men have drunk freely, then that which is worse, thou hast kept the good wine until now." It is well known that after those indulging feel somewhat the effects of wine, their sense of taste becomes dulled and they are then not as competent to judge good wine as they would have been before they drank any. This very evidently was what the ruler of the feast had in mind when he made the above quoted remark. His remark would have been void of all meaning, if the wine had been unfermented or simply grape juice.

Wherever used in the Bible the word "wine" invariably means fermented wine, as is evident from the following passages:

"And he (Noah) drank of the wine and was drunken."—Genesis 9:21.

"Wine cheereth God and man."—Judges, 9:13.

"Wine maketh glad the heart of man."—Psalms, 104:15.

"Wine is treacherous."—Habakkuk 2:5.

"Wine causeth redness of eyes."—Proverbs 23:29.

"Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess."—St. Paul in Ephesians 5:18.

In not a single passage in the Bible is the word wine used where it plainly means wine that is unfermented. When grape juice is meant, it so expressly states, as in Numbers 6:3.

There were certain religious sects among the Jews, such as the Rechabites (Jeremiah 35:6-10, Numbers 6:2-4, Judges 13:14) and the Nazarites, who were not only total abstainers, but they would not even set out vineyards or eat grapes because of the evils so often resulting from the use of products of the grape, and yet Jesus we are told furnished wine for feasters by a miracle. We cannot believe it. The New Testament miracles must stand or fall together. If this one falls, the others should fall with it.

The raising of Lazarus from the grave, after he had been dead four days, is the greatest of all the miracles Jesus is alleged to have wrought, and yet no mention is made of it save in the Gospel of St. John. Isn't it very strange that the other gospels do not even allude to it? That the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke make no mention of it because it was already mentioned in St. John's Gospel cannot be correct, for it is conceded by all that the first three gospels were written before St. John's Gospel was

written. Some apologists claim that the first three gospels make no mention of it because the history of it was still in the mouth of everybody so that a written record of it would have been superfluous, but the same thing can be said of all other miracles that they do record.

This miracle, we are told in St. John's Gospel (John 11:45-53) was the direct cause of the calling of a council of the chief priests and Pharisees at which the death of Jesus was determined upon, resulting soon afterward in his crucifixion. It is because of its important consequences that makes the silence of Matthew, Mark and Luke still more inexplicable.

The only reasonable conclusion we can come to is that the writers of the first three gospels did not know of this most marvelous of all miracles, or they surely would have recorded it. If they did not know of it, it could not have occurred. It arose at a later period and had its origin in tradition.

We would naturally think that the working of so great a miracle ought to have convinced every living Jew, including the high priests and Pharisees, of the Divine mission of Jesus so that they could not help but believe in him. But the effect produced, we are told, was just the contrary. The miracle created such a bitter enmity against Jesus that "from that day forth they took counsel that they might put him to death and that because of it Jesus "walked no more openly among the Jews but departed thence into the country near to the wilderness." (John 11: 53, 54.)

John's Gospel states that when Jesus was first

told of the sickness of Lazarus, he said: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." He must have approached Lazarus and his sister's home with much inward joy and peace of mind because of the opportunity the raising of Lazarus would give him to manifest the glory of God and his own power, besides the great joy it would bring to the two sisters, Martha and Mary. And yet we are told that when he met Martha and Mary "He groaned in the spirit and was troubled" and that he wept. Jesus could not have been guilty of this implied charge of duplicity. For this additional reason we can place no belief in the miracle.[1]

In the first three gospels the most frequent objects of the curative power of Jesus are the demoniacs or those possessed of devils. It is remarkable that not a single cure of demoniacs is mentioned in the fourth gospel. Either the writer of this gospel did not believe in them or he purposely omitted making mention of them because they were not believed in by the people for whose benefit the gospel was written, or it may be because this gospel was written at a late period when belief in them was already largely discredited.

Demons, according to the belief of the Jews, were the disembodied souls of wicked men of past ages, including the souls of those who perished in the

[1]The account of raising Lazarus from the dead may have been intended by its author as a purely symbolical story, the same as is the parable of Lazarus and Abraham. The two accounts are strikingly connected, not only because the name Lazarus occurs in both, but because of the noteworthy ending of the Lazarus and Abraham parable, namely: "And He said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded *if one rise from the dead.*"

Deluge and of those who participated in building the Tower of Babel. Being disembodied, the demons were believed to be continually roaming around seeking to find a habitation in some living human body whose will was weaker than their own and whom they could consequently dominate. After once finding lodgment within a person, the demon was believed to have taken such entire possession as to speak through his or her organs—Matt. 8:31—and to put his or her limbs in motion at pleasure—Mark 9:20. They were believed to be possessed of superior or supernatural power. As in the case of the Gerasene, it was possible for some persons to be possesed of a large number of devils.

The Jews acquired the doctrine of demons from the Persians, who believed in two gods, one good and the other evil. Good and evil spirits were supposed to be everywhere present. Satan and his great host of inferior demons, by sufferance of Jehovah, were believed to be largely dominating the world.

For various reasons the belief in demoniacal possession was very prevalent in the time of Jesus. The Jews were a highly imaginative people. They were grievously oppressed not only by reason of the Roman yoke but also because of the extensive system of graft that had sprung up among their own people in connection with the levying of the heavy taxes and in connection with the ceremonial rites and exactions at the Temple. The hot climate of Palestine tended to promote cases of hysteria. Many of their people were in continual fear and alarm lest a demon might take possession of them. The oppression, worry and excitement under which they

constantly labored tended to unbalance many of the weaker minds and influenced them to believe, and caused others to believe, that they were possessed of a demon.

We now know that all cases of demoniacal possession were nothing more than mental maladies and nervous disorders. But so mistaken a conception did the Jews have of them that many of the common ailments and diseases were by them regarded as cases of demoniacal possession. Several such are mentioned in the gospels. In Matthew 17:15 a man suffering from epilepsy is believed to owe his infliction to his being possessed by a demon. In Matthew 9:32, a man who is dumb is supposed to be so because of his being possessed of a demon. In Matthew 12:22, there is the same mistaken belief with regard to a man who is both dumb and blind. In Mark 5:1 a lunatic is supposed to be possessed, and in Luke 13:11-16 mention is make of a woman suffering from gouty contraction of body who is supposed to have come by her infliction because Satan had "bound her" for 20 years. The fact that the Jews had a mistaken conception as to the cause of many common diseases, such as those just cited, fully confirms our belief that all cases of demoniacal possesion were purely imaginary and the result of Jewish superstition.

According to the first three gospels, much the larger portion of the cures Jesus effected were of persons possessed of demons. In both Mark and Luke's gospels the first cure Jesus wrought was the healing of "a man that had a spirit of an unclean demon." "They brought unto him many possessed

with demons and he cast out the spirits with a word," says Matthew. "And he called unto him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of diseases and all manner of sickness," again says Matthew. It is significant that Peter in a discourse at Caesarea after the crucifixion sums up the whole activity of Jesus in these words: "'Even Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." (Acts 10:38.)

It cannot be doubted that Jesus had wonderful success in curing persons supposed to be possessed of demons. He and his disciples, however, were not the only ones who effected cures of this kind. The gospels themselves speak of others who effected similar cures. (Matt. 7:22, Mark 9:38-40, Luke 9: 49, 50.) There were many healers in those days who delivered or attempted to deliver from the possession or influence of unclean spirits and who met with varying success. A person with a commanding presence and a strong mind can exert a wonderful influence over another not so strong and whose mind has been weakened by epilepsy and other forms of hysteria then so prevalent among the Jews. While following their profession of driving out evil sprits, the exorcists used much ceremony consisting of mysterious gestures and oft-repeated incantations. Jesus used no mystical words or formulas. He simply spoke with authority, commanding the evil spirit to leave the person diseased. With his majestic presence and personality he must have had great power

over weak and distracted persons. Combining, as he did, commanding authority with extreme gentleness and sympathy, he must have exerted a healing force that in his time was not equaled. But that by miracle he should have cured diseases with which he was entirely mistaken as to their nature, or that he should have driven imaginary devils out of persons by supernatural power, is inconceivable.

It appears very plainly in the gospels that Jesus made no claim to performing miracles. Whenever he was asked for a sign[1] or miracle, he invariably refused to comply with the request. In Matthew 12:38-40 we read: "Then certain of the Scribes and Pharisees answered him saying, Teacher we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall be no sign given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet, for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

At another time the Jews asked him, "What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?" He showed no sign or wrought no miracle for them, but replied: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." It is stated that after his death his disciples then realized that he spoke not of the temple in Jerusalem, as was supposed by his hearers, but that "He spake of the temple of his body."

[1]The word for sign in the original Greek gospel is SEMEION, the literal meaning of which is miracle, which shows or proves the power of him who work it. If it were less than a miracle, it would show no divine power.

At still another time, "the Pharisees came forth and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign of heaven, trying him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit and saith, Why does this generation seek a sign? Verily I say unto you there shall be no sign given to this generation."—Mark 8:11, 12.

He thus spurned every suggestion that he should work miracles and always sharply rebuked such a desire as betaking of a perverse spirit. When he said with emphasis, "there shall be no sign given to this generation," He must surely have meant what he said. It is not possible that he should have said this one day and broken it the next.

We have every reason to believe that the gospels were written by men pious and truthful, who sincerely believed in the truth of every word that they wrote. And yet here we have a plain discrepancy. If Jesus positively refused to do miracles, he certainly could not have wrought any. How then did the alleged miracles come to be inserted in the gospels?

Jesus undoubtedly effected many wonderful cures in such persons who in that age were deemed to be possessed of devils, by reason of his remarkable personality, his power over weaker minds, and of his great sympathy and tenderness. His was a life of service and he was continually seeking to lessen the burdens of those oppressed in mind or body. After his death his wonderful cures naturally were magnified and in time became much more wonderful. We all know that the tendency of tradition is greatly to exaggerate. In that superstitious age, and cen-

turies before the time of newspapers and of printed books, it could not have taken many years for the common belief to prevail in Palestine that Jesus had wrought many miracles. This belief more readily gained credence, too, because Jesus was regarded as a prophet and all the prophets of old were believed to have performed miracles.

It is a fact that the first gospel that was written gave simply the teachings of Jesus and gave very few, if any, of the incidents of his life. As his teachings spread and as time elapsed the Christian converts became desirous of learning more about his life. In the meanwhile the disciples and all other eyewitnesses of what Jesus had said or done passed away and a new generation had appeared, even the second generation passed away and a third appeared. The miracles as we now have them in the New Testament were handed down thru traditional sources a length of time sufficient to have all of the Christian converts sincerely to believe that they had actually been wrought. We have reason to believe that the miracles—one after another as they gained full credence with the Christians—came to be inserted in the gospel manuscripts, originally as marginal notes, and that they subsequently were embodied in the text of the manuscripts. The reasons for this belief we will now give in detail.

So far as we know, Jesus himself left no written records, nor were any made by his direction. His disciples and the early Christian converts believed the end of the world to be quite near (I. Peter 4:7; I. John 2:18; James 5:8-9; Matt. 24:34; Mark 13:30;

Matt. 16:28; Luke 21:32); and thus for a long time they saw no need of preserving in writing the life and teachings of Jesus.

The first written records that were made pertaining to the Christian faith were the several Epistles of Paul. His Epistle to the Thessalonians, believed to be his first, was written about 18 years after Jesus' death and his last Epistle was written shortly before his own death in 63 A. D. From Paul's writings we gather several noteworthy facts. All of them are in the form of letters—Epistles—written not for the purpose of preserving and perpetuating the new faith, for he, too, believed the end of the world was near (I. Thess. 4:14-18; Romans 13:11, 12; I. Cor. 7:29; Philippians 4:5), but simply with the view of instructing and encouraging the members of distant churches that he had established, whom he at the time could not well reach personally. Very rarely, if at all, does Paul in any of his Epistles give or quote any words or teachings of Jesus. In none of his Epistles does he allude to any of the four gospels of the New Testament, for the undoubted reason that they had not yet appeared or had not yet been written. Paul does not make mention of a single miracle that either Jesus or he himself should have wrought. Another noteworthy fact is that the several Epistles of Peter, of John and of James—written statements direct from those who would have been eyewitnesses—do not make mention of a single miracle that Jesus is alleged to have wrought.

All that we know of the early history of the four gospels, outside of what the New Testament furnishes, is what we gather from the writings, such as

have been preserved, of the early fathers of the church. Papias, a bishop of the church in Asia Minor who wrote in about 120 A. D., is the very first of the early church fathers who makes reference to the writings of Matthew and of Mark. He states that Matthew made a written record of the sayings and teachings of Jesus—"The Lord's Oracle," he calls them—in the Aramic language, which was then the common language spoken in Judea. It is evident from what Papias writes that the Gospel according to Matthew originally contained only a collection of the words of Jesus and gave no incidents of his life, nor of his miracles. Papias also states that Mark had not seen or heard Jesus, but had been a follower of Peter and that after Peter's death Mark reduced to writing all that he remembered of what Peter spoke of the things said and done by Christ. He dwells on the defects of "order" or arrangement in Mark, who, he says, never even contemplated an orderly treatise. Papias makes no mention either of Luke's or John's gospels.

Justin Martyr, who wrote in about the year 140 A. D., refers in his writings to the "Oracles" recorded by Matthew and to the "Notes" made by Mark, and he also at times makes mention of "The Memoirs of the apostles and their followers," stating that the memoirs were read with the books of the prophets in the service of the church. By the term "apostles" he evidently refers to Matthew and John and by the term "their followers" to Mark and Luke. It is noteworthy that when Justin Martyr refers in his writings to what we now know as gospels, he names them as notes or memoirs.

Polycarp, Clement of Rome and Ignatius, the early fathers of the church prior to the time of Papias and Justin Martyr, in their writings frequently quote sayings and teachings of Jesus, but it is difficult to determine whether they quote them from written records or as received thru oral tradition. They make no direct mention of either of the four gospels. Some of their quotations as "words of the Lord" are not found in any of our gospels. Even the quotations that Papias and Justin Martyr make from the "Oracles of Matthew" are not always accurate, showing that Matthew's manuscript must from time to time have undergone slight changes, no doubt when copies of it were being made. Later on, when the fathers of the church do begin to quote from our four gospels, mentioning them by name, they also frequently quote from other writings now called apocryphal or uncanonical. None of them were deemed sacred or inspired until toward the close of the second century, or 150 years after the death of Jesus.

The early Christians, most of them, belonged to the lower classes of society, to the poor and uneducated, and for many years very few converts were made among those of wealth, intelligence and influence. They were often viewed with distrust and were in a large measure despised by their neighbors. As they increased in number they began to be persecuted by those in authority and they were obliged to meet for worship in secret places. For a long time the new faith was propagated among them solely by word of mouth. After the lapse of 30 or more years

when the Teachings or Oracles of Jesus by Matthew and the manuscripts of Mark and of Luke first appeared, they were obliged to keep the manuscripts hidden and very few had access to them. Many of the converts could not have read them, even if they had access to them. So that for many years, even after the gospel manuscripts appeared, the Christians had to depend for what they learned of the Christian faith not so much on written documents as on oral teachings and oral traditions.

What was received by the early Christians thru oral tradition was by them deemed fully as reliable as what was contained in their gospel manuscripts. Even Paul, the first to reduce to writing the tenets of the new faith, says: "So then, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which ye were taught." There were those among the early fathers of the church who believed that what was obtained thru tradition was even more reliable than what was obtained from the manuscripts. Papias, the bishop in Asia Minor, already referred to, in his work entitled "Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord," writes: "For I imagined that what was to be gotten from written manuscripts was not so profitable to us as what came from the living and abiding voice," and again he says: "He could gain more reliable knowledge from the living voice of tradition than he could from the manuscripts."

Not only were the original Gospel manuscripts kept in hidden places and were read by few, but they were not very durable. After being used for a time, they had to be rewritten. According to the custom

of that time they were written with pen and ink on a frail paper made of papyrus. Uncial or large capital letters were used thruout. The words ran one into the other, with no division between them, and no punctuation was used. The papyrus manuscripts were kept in rolls, which were unrolled while they were being read and again rolled at the other end. Frequent rolling tended to break them and to puncture them with holes. If they became at all wet or damp, this tended to deface the writing. They were therefore not very durable and often had to be copied on new papyrus rolls in order to preserve the contents. Copies, too, were occasionally made to be sent to distant churches.

We learn from the writings of the fathers of the church that corrections or slight changes were sometimes made in the Gospel manuscripts. Corrections were occasionally made in order to remove difficulties; changes were sometimes made in the text so that it would more conform with other texts or with accepted beliefs, and the citations from the Old Testament were sometimes made more exact or more complete. We learn furthermore that additions were occasionally made to the Gospel texts, additions that were taken from parallel narratives in other texts, and additions that were of traditional source which had been orally handed down for so long a time that they had become commonly accepted beliefs.

The corrections and slight changes were usually made or inserted between the lines of the text, and the additions were usually written on the margins of

the text. It was by means of these marginal notes, or glosses as they were called, that much new material was being gradually added to the original text. Whenever a subsequent copy of the gospel manuscript was made, these insertions and marginal notes were not usually copied as such, but they were embodied in and made part of the text.

All this was done in perfect good faith. No deliberate falsification of the text was at all practiced. The sole aim of the scribes and copyists was to get from reliable sources, as they thought, all that Jesus had said and all that he had done. Inasmuch as no writings were yet deemed sacred or inspired, they felt justified in making corrections and additions in order to get at the true Gospel story.

There is apparently much reason for the peculiar phraseology that was used in framing the titles to the Gospels, namely: The Gospel according to Matthew, the Gospel according to Mark, etc. Matthew, Mark and Luke were probably originally named as the direct authors of their respective Gospels, but because of the many corrections and additions that had slowly and gradually crept into the three several texts, the scribes, copyists and the early officials of the church no longer felt themselves justified in attributing to Matthew, Mark and Luke the direct authorsihp of their several writings, so they gave to the Gospels the titles as we now have them. John's Gospel was written at a much later date and confines itself mostly to the teachings, so that the changes and additions made to its text were comparatively few.

The exact time cannot be determined when the Gospels and the other books of the New Testament were canonized and placed on a level with the books of the Old Testament, but this did not occur until at least 130 years after the death of Jesus. During these 130 years there appeared a large number of writings pertaining to the Christian faith in the shape of Gospel narratives, epistles, homilies, prophecies, apostolic histories and apocalyptic visions.[1] Many of them were for a long time deemed fully as genuine by the primitive fathers of the church as were the books of the present canon. During the second century a number of heretical sects sprang up, the Gnostics, Marcionites and others, who severely disputed and denied certain important doctrines of the church, and then for the first time was clearly felt the absolute necessity of forming a strict list of really authoritative writings. It was shortly after 160 A. D., or during the second half of the second century, that we for the first time find that a canon of Scripture had been established, a canon of Scripture deemed holy and inspired. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian, theological writers, each at about the same time recognize the existence of the canon, but how or where it was established is not known. It was at about the

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[1]These are the names of several of them: The Shepherd of Hermas, Epistle of Barnabas, Gospel according to the Hebrews, Gospel of the Egyptians, Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of Peter, Epistle of Clement, Acts of Paul, Revelation of Peter, Teachings of the Apostles, Preaching of Peter. Traditions of Matthew, Acts of Andrew and Acts of John.

Gospel of Thomas states that Jesus in a fit of ill temper, when a youth, struck a companion with death and then when he was remonstrated with, he cursed his accusers with blindness.

Traditions of Matthew states that Jesus carried water in his mantle when his pitcher was broken, and that he made birds of clay while playing on the Sabbath and that when he was accused of naughtiness, he caused them to fly.

same time that a Catholic Church was instituted, so that the formation of a Catholic Church and a canon were virtually simultaneous.

Irenaeus includes the Shepherd of Hermas in the canon of Scripture, but ignores several of the Epistles. Clement of Alexandria includes the Shepherd of Hermas, speaks of it as divine, and also includes in the canon the Epistle of Barnabas and the Epistle of Clement. Tertullian excludes several of the present Epistles and it is of peculiar significance that even at that late day he attaches as of equal importance to the canon the traditions orally transmitted in such churches as had been taught by the apostles. These three fathers did not fix the canon absolutely. Its limits were still unsettled. But they sanctioned most of the books now accepted as divine.

In writing of the four Gospels of the New Testament, Irenaeus states that they are the four pillars on which the foundation of the church is built, and that there are just four in number, no more, no less. He compares them with the four general winds, the four directions of the earth, the four faces of the cherubim, and with the four general covenants given to humanity, namely, that with Noah, with the sign of the rainbow; Abraham's, with the sign of circumcision; the giving of the law to Moses; and the Gospel thru our Lord Jesus Christ. Irenaeus berates those who bring forth more or fewer Gospels.

Origen, a distinguished theologian who wrote about 250 A. D., divides the Christian books into three classes: First, those generally received as canonical; second, those controverted or doubtful, in which he included the Epistle of Barnabas, Gospel

according to the Hebrews, Gospel of the Egyptians, the Acts of Paul; third, the heretical, under which he included the Epistles of James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John. As to those he classes as doubtful he appeals to the tradition of the church for a decision as to whether or not they belong to the canon.

After the four present Gospels were selected, in exclusion of all other Gospels, as authoritative and canonical, Origen, Theophilus and others made careful comparison of the several texts of the first three Gospels, or the synoptics, with the view of harmonizing their contents and completely to smooth them into uniformity.

Eusebius of Caesarea, known as the father of ecclesiastical history, in about the year 332 A. D. was entrusted by Constantine, the emperor of Rome, with the commission to make out a complete collection of the sacred Christian writings for the use of the Catholic church. Eusebius followed ecclesiastical tradition and divided the Christian writings, the same as did Origen, into the three classes of canonical, doubtful and heretical.

The Council of Laodicea, held in 363 A. D., virtually decided the canon for the Greek or Eastern branch of the Christian church. It included all of the present books of the New Testament with the exception of the last, the Book of Revelation. The canon of the Roman Catholic church was not finally determined until at the Council of Trent, held in 1546 A. D. Martin Luther was of the opinion that Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews was not authentic, the Revelation of John he considered neither apostolic nor prophetic, and the Epistle of James he pronounced

unapostolic and a book of straw. It is a matter of dispute among theologians even to this day whether several of the books now included in the New Testament ought not to be excluded as being uncanonical. The books considered doubtful are Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, 2 Peter, James, Jude and Revelation.

When we consider therefore how the Gospels of the New Testament came to be written; that their formation was a very gradual process extending over a period more than a century in length, we can readily understand how easy it was for the miracles to be inserted subsequent to the time when the Gospel writings were first started. The first three Gospels originally must have been very brief. Matthew's Gospel, when first written, contained only the teachings of Jesus. Mark "wrote from memory." All that Mark and Luke wrote the fathers of the church termed mere "Notes" or "Memoirs." When Christianity began to spread thru the Gentile world the new converts naturally were desirous of learning more of the life history of the founder of their religion. Jesus had lived in comparative obscurity during the greater portion of his life and this made it difficult to learn much about him. What added to the difficulty was that in the meanwhile the city of Jerusalem with its temple was destroyed and such of its inhabitants who had not been slain were widely dispersed. The Christian converts were obliged to depend on oral tradition for nearly all that they learned of his life. What they learned from traditional sources they deemed fully as reliable as what they learned from their meagre manuscripts, in fact

more so. Anything that was handed down thru oral tradition came from many mouths, there usually would be many sponsors to vouch for its truthfulness, while as to anything that was contained in a manuscript—a fragile and perishable papyrus roll—there was no accredited sponsor for it save its author. For a long time the written rolls had to be kept in hiding and were accessible to but few persons. The condition of things and the character of the original Gospel manuscripts were such that it need not be wondered at that Paul wrote "Hold fast to your traditions"; that Bishop Papias stated that he could gain more reliable knowledge from tradition than he could from the written records, or that Justin Martyr wrote that "Oral tradition was the chief fountain of Christian knowledge."

We must remember that Christianity had its rise in an age of superstition. The Jews naturally believed in miracles because of their peculiar conception of Jehovah. They regarded him as their tribal god, their god only. Like all other tribal gods, Jehovah was believed directly and frequently to intervene in human affairs for the benefit of his own particular people. Jesus was regarded as a prophet and the prophets of old were believed to have wrought all kinds of wonders. Elisha in particular was credited with many miracles. One time while on his way to Bethel he was followed by a lot of boys who mocked and made sport of him. "He looked behind him and saw them and cursed them in the name of Jehovah and there came forth two she-bears out of the wood and tare forty-two lads of them."—2 Kings 2:24. He supplied an abundance

of water for Jehosophat's army in an arid desert and he restored the dead son of a Shunammite woman to life. Jesus and his disciples were not the only ones in their time whom the Jews believed to have performed miracles. Satan and his demons were believed to have the same power. The founders of other religions were believed by their adherents to have wrought miracles. Buddha was claimed to have produced earthquakes by stamping his foot on the ground, and one time while absorbed in deep meditation he lifted himself up in the air and wondrous flames of all colours radiated from his body. The gods of Rome and of Greece were credited with marvelous wonders. Aesculapius was believed to have restored at least ten dead persons to life. Among many other marvels by him wrought, Pythagoras is said to have caused the flooded waters of a river to subside so that his disciples could safely cross. Apollonius of Capadocia, born shortly before the Christian era, was believed to have wrought many miracles. He knew all languages without having learned them, and at one time he astonished the magistrates of Rome by raising to life the dead body of a lady of noble birth. A magnificent temple was raised to him in Cappadocia and he was there worshipped as a god for centuries. And so we might go on and enumerate many more alleged miracles which for a time had multitudes of sincere believers.

In that credulous and superstitious age when there was a common belief in miracles, not only among those adhering to the Christian religion, but among the adherents of every other religion, it naturally did not take many years after his death before tradition

had credited Jesus with the miracles which are recorded in the New Testament. They the more readily gained credence because of the undoubted fact that he had most wonderful power in healing certain diseases very numerous in his time, those believed to have been caused by demoniacal possession. Handed down by tradition from one generation to another, the miracles gradually came to be inserted in the Gospel manuscripts as marginal notes by those who sincerely believed in them. Subsequently, whenever copies were made of the manuscripts, as was the usual custom, the marginal notes were embodied in the text.

It was not only the miracles that were subsequently inserted in the Gospel manuscripts. They contain other material which very evidently was added to the texts in the same manner as were the miracles. For example: In Matthew 10:5 we read that Jesus charges his disciples, "Go not into any way of the Gentiles and enter not into any city of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And in Matthew 15:24 Jesus says, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." While in Matthew 28:19 Jesus commands his disciples, "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." And again in Mark 13:10 he says, "and the Gospel must first be preached unto all the nations."

Here is a plain variance. The first two quoted passages are likely correct for two reasons: First, Jesus confined his own labors to Israel alone. Sec-

ond, if Jesus had actually commanded the apostles to make disciples of all the Gentile nations, it would be practically impossible to understand how the apostles could have withstood Paul so hotly on this very point.

It is very evident therefore that the last two quoted passages must have been subsequently inserted, the same as were the miracles.

The miracles narrated in the New Testament must have been inserted subsequent to the time when the Gospels were first written, for the reason that in no instance do they make the least impression on other events which immediately follow them as told in the Gospel texts. Subsequent events are related as tho no miracle had just been wrought, as tho they had in no way exerted any influence over the persons who are said to have witnessed them.

In the seventh chapter of Luke we are told that Jesus in the presence of a large multitude restored to life the dead son of a widow in the city of Nain, while they were carrying him on a bier to his grave, and that the report thereof went forth "in the whole of Judea and all the region round about." Shortly afterward, for it is recorded in the very next chapter of Luke, Jesus is said to have restored to life the daughter of Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue. When he came to the house of Jairus he found them all weeping and he said, "Weep not, for she is not dead but sleepeth." And we are told that "they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead." Had the miracle occurred at Nain as related, in place of laughing him to scorn they more likely would

have said "He brought back to life the widow's son; we believe he can also restore the life of Jairus' daughter." And again we are told, "the fame thereof went forth into all the land."

Just before Jesus restored Lazarus to life after he had been dead four days, as narrated in John's Gospel, he told Martha, "thy brother shall rise again." It is very evident from her reply that Martha entertained no thought that he could or would restore Lazarus to life, for she says: "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Some of the Jews that were present at the tomb said, "Could not this man who opened the eyes of him who was blind, have caused that this man also should not die?" Had the former miracles actually been wrought they would much more likely have said, "He restored the widow's son to life and he restored the daughter of Jairus to life; we believe he can also restore Lazarus to life." Every man and woman in Judea must have known of Jairus' daughter and the widow's son being restored to life, if these miracles occurred, and yet of all that was said and done at the raising of Lazarus, as narrated in John's Gospel, it is very evident that neither the disciples, nor Martha and Mary, nor any of the Jews then present, could possibly have known of the former miracles.

In all four of the Gospels we are told that Jesus at one time fed 5,000 men, not counting the women and children, with only 5 barley loaves and 2 fishes and that after the feeding there were enough broken fragments of bread left to fill 12 baskets. According to the sixth chapter of John this same multitude on

the very next day ask Jesus these questions: "What then doest thou for a sign, that we may see and believe thee? What workest thou? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written. He gave them bread out of heaven to eat." Had Jesus actually wrought the miracle of feeding the 5,000 the day previous, no such questions would have been asked him, conclusively showing that the miracle must have been inserted in the text at some subsequent time.

According to the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, Jesus soon afterward fed another multiture, this time there being 4,000 people, whom he fed with 7 loaves and a few small fish. On this second occasion after Jesus expressed a desire to furnish the people with food, his disciples ask, "Whence shall one be able to fill these men with bread here in a desert place?" That his disciples in so short a time should have totally forgotten the former feeding of the multitude and doubted Jesus' power is almost inconceivable if the former miracle was actually wrought. Even shortly after the feeding of the 5,000 and again of the 4,000, according to Mark, the disciples had apparently forgotten both, when while on a voyage with Jesus they complained that they had no bread in the boat, only one loaf.

Jesus performs in quick succession the most marvelous of miracles, culminating in the raising of Lazarus after he had been dead four days. Oughtn't it to have been enough to convert every soul in Judea? And yet the only effect it has upon the Jews is that their main governing body, the Sanhedrim, determines to have Jesus put to death. At the time of the

crucifixion, miracles still more marvelous, if possible, take place. All of a sudden in the middle of the day a complete darkness falls over the earth lasting for three hours. The veil of the temple is rent in two from the top to the bottom. The earth begins to quake, so that the rocks are rent and the tombs are opened. Many bodies of the saints are raised, and coming forth out of their tombs they appear unto many in Jerusalem. No one apparently is at all impressed with these stupendous occurrences save only the Roman centurion and a few of his soldiers present at the cross and they say, "Truly this was the Son of God." So little of an impression does it make on the Jews that their chief priests and the Pharisees appear before Pilate, saying, "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, after three days I arise again, command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest haply his disciples come and steal him away and say unto the people, he is risen from the dead; and the last error will be worse than the first."

So little of an impression do these marvelous occurrences make that apparently no one is converted because of them, not even Paul, who kept on persecuting the Christians the same as before, and who was not converted until some time afterward. Paul makes no mention of them in any of his Epistles. No historian makes mention of them, not even the Jewish historians, Josephus and Philo. Josephus, who was 18 years of age at the time of the alleged occurrences and who relates in minute detail everything that transpired under Pontius Pilate, does in

no way even allude to them. They could not have occurred. The only reasonable conclusion we can come to is that they had their origin subsequently in tradition; that they were handed down from one generation to another until they were believed to have actually occurred and that as soon as an alleged miracle gained common belief it was inserted in one or more of the gospels, first as a marginal note and later embodied in the text.

An apparently strong argument advanced in favor of the New Testament miracles is that they are to such an extent interwoven with the teachings of Jesus that they are well nigh inseparable. Many of the teachings, it is claimed, are drawn from or based on the cures wrought, so that if you reject the cures you must likewise reject the teachings.

This is true only in one certain class of cures. If we examine the Gospel texts we will find that where the teachings of Jesus are interwoven with the wonderful cures he effects, it is almost without exception in cases of persons supposed to be possessed of demons. There are at least seven such cases mentioned in the Gospels, namely: A man with an unclean spirit in the synagogue at Capernaum; a dumb man possessed of a demon; casting a demon out of an epileptic; a youth who had a dumb spirit; the woman who had a spirit of infirmity for 18 years, one possessed of a demon, blind and dumb; and the Canaanitish woman whose daughter is vexed with a demon. It is quite probable that all of these cures were wrought by Jesus. For reasons already stated, he wielded wonderful power in healing diseases of

this kind, but it is inconceivable that miracles should have been performed to cure these diseases, the cause and nature of which were entirely mistaken by those who wrought the alleged miracles. Whatever there is of a miraculous nature, and there is but little, in the healing of these diseases, must subsequently have crept in thru traditional sources.

The other healings credited in the Gospels to Jesus, wherein his teachings are directly drawn from the cures, are, if we mistake not, only three, namely: The cure of a man sick of the palsy, healing the man with a withered hand on a Sabbath, and healing a man with dropsy on a Sabbath. There is very little teaching connected with the first one, and the last two bear every evidence of having originally been parables, the purpose of which was to show that it was lawful to do good deeds on the Sabbath, in refutation of the Pharisees, who held that no work of any kind should be done on the Sabbath. All of the real miracles said to have been wrought are not connected with any teachings. The turning of water into wine, healing Peter's wife's mother of a fever, curing the lepers, curing the two blind men near Jericho, Jesus walking upon the waters, stilling the tempest of the sea, the feeding of the 5,000 and of the 4,000, driving a legion of demons out of the Gerasene into a herd of 2,000 swine that rushed down into and perished in the sea, the transfiguration and the restoration of the lives of the widow's son, of Jairus' daughter and of Lazarus, not one of them has any connection with what follows in the text and each and all of them can be removed from the Gospels without at all interfering with the teachings.

In the eleventh chapter of Matthew we are told that when John the Baptist, who was in prison, heard of the works of Jesus he sent his disciples to ask of Jesus, "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" And this, we are told, was Jesus' answer: "Go and tell John the things which ye hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them. And blessed is he whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me."

It is remarkable that this list should close with what is not a miracle at all. However, the last clause fits admirably if Jesus was speaking not of the physically but the spiritually blind, lame, leprous, deaf and dead. Jesus was wont to speak metaphorically and in parables. That his answer to John was intended to be taken not literally but figuratively appears very evident from the following metaphorical words of Isaiah, with whose writings we all know Jesus was familiar, namely: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out and streams in the desert."—Isaiah 35:5, 6. And also in Isaiah 61:1, "The spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

It is claimed that Paul fully believed in miracles. He no doubt did. He lived in a time when there was a general belief in them not only among his own people, but thruout the Gentile world. He was a Jew and undoubtedly had the same vague views regarding the natural and the supernatural as all of his race then had. But it is a singular fact that in all that he wrote he does not cite a single miracle that either he or Jesus should have wrought. That he himself possessed no supernatural power to heal the sick may plainly be inferred from several passages in his Epistles. He was compelled at one time to modify his plans because of "an infirmity of the flesh," and on two occasions he was inconvenienced and suffered much anxiety on account of the sickness of his friends, Epaphroditus and Trophinus. If he really restored the life of Eutychus at Troas, as is claimed in the Acts of Apostles, would he not have cured Epaphroditus and Trophinus, who were simply ill and whose assistance meant so much to him in his good work?

Soon after the crucifixion, according to the Acts of Apostles, both Paul and Peter on various occasions made addresses before crowds, consisting largely of unbelieving Jews, trying to convince them that Jesus was the Son of God. They summed up in a brief way the whole history of Israel and endeavored to prove that Jesus was the Messiah who frequently had been foretold by the prophets. It is very singular that in none of their addressees does either Peter or Paul cite the remarkable miracles that occurred before the crucifixion, the raising of Lazarus, the supernatural darkness enveloping the earth,

and the many who arose from their graves and appeared in Jerusalem. They could have cited nothing more convincing in their efforts to prove the divinity of Jesus. Indeed it would not have been necessary for Peter and Paul to prove the divinity of Jesus if these miracles had actually occurred. Every Jew would have been convinced of it.

Another argument advanced in favor of the miracles are the alleged appearances of Jesus after his crucifixion, not only attested to in the four Gospels but also vouched for by Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians.

While Paul was crossing the desert and on his way to Damascus, there suddenly shone round about him a great light from heaven. He fell upon the earth and heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the goad." We are told that "he could not see for the glory of the light." He asked, "What shall I do, Lord," and the Lord said, "Arise and go into Damascus and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do." Paul arose from the earth and when he opened his eyes he could not see, and they that were with him led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. There are three separate accounts of this experience of Paul given in the Acts of Apostles, in chapters 9, 22 and 26, and they do not in all respects agree. For example, in Acts 9:7 it is stated that those that were with Paul heard the voice from heaven, while in Acts 22:9 it is stated that they did not hear the voice, only Paul heard it.

When Paul states that the risen Christ appeared to him while in the desert and that he heard his voice, he evidently does not mean an ordinary seeing and hearing with the physical senses, but an inward experience with his soul. He could not have actually seen Jesus, for it is expressly stated that "he could not see for the glory of the light," and when it was all over with "his eyes were opened," plainly showing that what he saw and heard was an inward seeing and experience, or a vision. Paul intimates that it was not an ordinary seeing whenever he subsequently refers to it. In Galatians 1:16 he says: "It pleased God to reveal his Son *in me,* that I might preach him among the Gentiles," evidently referring to his conversion while in the desert. In 2 Corinthians 4:6 he says: "God *shined in our hearts* for the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And we have the statement of Paul, as reported in Acts 26:19, that what he saw while on his way to Damascus was a heavenly vision. "Wherefore, oh King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision," he says.

It was not the only vision that Paul had. He had a number of them. "But I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord," he says in 2 Corinthians 12:1. "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night," as stated in Acts 16:9. At another time, "For there stood by me this night an angel of the God whose I am, whom also I serve saying, Fear not, Paul, thou must stand before Caesar, and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee"—Acts 27:23. Peter had a vision in the middle of the day, the same as had Paul, when he saw the heavens open and a

great sheet let down wherein were four-footed beasts, insects and birds, as stated in Acts 10:10. The Book of Revelations is composed of visions that were seen by John.

Paul evidently believed that the risen Jesus, the Triune God, would not appear or speak to him or to any other man, save in visions. In speaking of God and the Lord Jesus Christ in I Timothy 6:16, he says: "Whom no man hath seen or can see." Whenever God is alleged to have appeared and spoken to the prophets, it was always in visions. Samuel in a vision is called by Jehovah to be a prophet—1 Samuel 3. Jehovah spoke to the prophet Isaiah in visions —Isaiah 1:1. "The heavens were opened and I saw visions of God"—Ezekiel 1:1. The word of Jehovah came to the prophet Joel in visions. Daniel says: "I saw in my vision by night." The prophet Hosea says: "I have multiplied visions"—Hosea 12, 10.

Paul uses the same Greek word for the appearance to himself that he does for the appearances to Cephas, to James, and to the other disciples. So he evidently believed that the appearances of Jesus to the disciples were likewise visions. Paul's statement that Jesus also appeared to above 500 brethren at once is plainly an interpolation. This would have been by far the most remarkable of all the appearances, yet not one of the Gospels makes mention of it and nowhere else in the entire New Testament is this appearance even alluded to. No circumstance, time or place is mentioned in connection with it, and it bears all the earmarks of having been subsequently inserted.

Up to the time of his conversion Paul had zealously persecuted the Christians. He was present at the time Stephen was stoned to death. The joyful courage of the martyr, his brave and forgiving words and his glorified countenance at the moment of his death must have made a deep impression on Paul. Shortly afterward he started out on his journey to Damascus. While on the way his conscience may have sorely troubled him because of his persecution of the Christians. The hot scorching sands of the desert may likewise have exerted an influence. All combined were a psychological preparation for the vision that appeared to him. No voice from heaven would have made use of such an expression as "It is hard for thee to kick against the goad." The goad was in his soul and sorely troubled his conscience, against which he had vainly sought to kick before his conversion.

The appearances of Jesus to his disciples and others after the resurrection, as described in the final chapters of the Gospels, are full of contradictions and are therefore not trustworthy. The number of women who after the crucifixion visit the tomb is variously represented from a whole company to only one. In Matthew they witness the removal of the stone, in Luke they found the stone already removed when they arrive. The angel is outside of the tomb in Matthew, he is inside of the tomb in Mark, and there are two angels inside the tomb in Luke. According to John, Jesus said to Mary Magdalene, "Touch me not for I am not yet ascended to the Father." According to Matthew, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary "came and took hold of his feet

and worshipped him." Matthew says Jesus appeared to the disciples in Galilee only, Luke says he appeared to them in Jerusalem only, and John says he appeared to them in Jerusalem first and in Galilee later. According to Luke, the disciples are to wait for the Spirit, according to John, they received the Spirit immediately. According to Luke, Jesus ascended to heaven the evening of the third day after the crucifixion, according to the Acts he ascended not till 40 days afterward. We must conclude that the appearances of Jesus after his death and the incidents connected therewith were inserted in the Gospels subsequently and were based on traditions which had circulated sufficiently long to gather divergent elements by the course of transmission.

That the tomb of Jesus was found empty cannot be doubted. It is also clear that the disciples had not caused the removal of the body. Either the chief priests or the Roman soldiers secretly removed the body for reasons of their own, or it may be, too, that Joseph of Arimathaea or some other man whom Jesus had befriended, unbeknown to the disciples, secretly removed and buried the body. The disciples were charged by the Pharisees with having removed it. Knowing that they had not done so and calling to mind the words spoken by Jesus before his death, they became convinced of his resurrection. Laboring under much suppressed excitement, some if not all of the disciples believed they had seen Jesus in visions. They reported it to others. The reports became spread and were handed down to succeeding generations. Thru tradition the visions became transformed into actual appearances and were

clothed with all the conflicting details as we now find them in the final chapters of the several Gospels.

Paul in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians says that when the last trumpet shall sound "we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," and that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." In the final chapters of the Gospels we find a direct contradiction of Paul's teachings. Luke, for example, states that the risen Jesus stood in their midst; the disciples supposed they beheld a spirit; but Jesus said, "Why are ye troubled and wherefore do questionings arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet that it is I myself, handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having"; he showed them his hands and feet; he asked them, "Have ye anything to eat?" and they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them. In fact, the appearances of the risen Jesus, as described in the Gospels, are in themselves contradictory. He is represented as eating and as being touched by the disciples as tho he were clothed in a corporeal body, and at the same time he is represented as suddenly appearing in their midst and again disappearing and ascending into heaven as tho he were clothed in a spiritual body. A body capable of making its way thru closed doors surely has ceased to be tangible and cannot be touched.

The resurrection was and is an abiding fact. The disciples and the first Christians were fully convinced of the resurrection of Jesus the third day after his death, not because of his alleged appearances, but because it was in in accord with what they had

always been taught. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:4, "and that he was buried, and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures," meaning the Old Testament, the only Scriptures they then had. The belief in the resurrection on the third day was based on such scriptural passages as are found in Hosea 6:2, 2 Kings 20:5 and Daniel 12:2. It was the common belief among the Jews. The only sect among them who did not believe in the resurrection were the Sadducees. According to both Mark and Matthew, Jesus had on at least five different occasions told his disciples that after his death he would arise again on the third day. It seems very strange therefore that, as narrated in the Gospels, the disciples refused to believe in the resurrection of Jesus until thru the instrumentality of the alleged appearances it was forced upon them. The asserted unbelief on the part of the disciples plainly had its origin in tradition and the evident purpose of it was to make the alleged appearances seem still more marvelous.

Jesus of Nazareth

CHAPTER I.

Jesus the Prophet.

During his lifetime Jesus was regarded as a prophet. "A great prophet has arisen," was the general belief among his own people. The woman at the well in Samaria says to him, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." On his triumphal entry into Jerusalem he was proclaimed by the multitude as a prophet. The Pharisees, however, denied all claims of his being a prophet, one time declaring, "Search and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." But on a number of occasions did the multitudes addressed by Jesus exclaim, "This is of a truth the prophet." After his crucifixion one of his disciples spoke of him as "Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people."

It appears that Jesus regarded himself as a prophet. On one occasion he stated that the experience of his own life was the universal experience of all prophets, namely, that "a prophet is not without honor save in his own country and in his own house." On another occasion he said to certain Pharisees, "Nevertheless I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem" (Luke 13:33). So whatever doubt there is as to what else Jesus may

have been regarded, he considered himself a prophet and he was so regarded by his followers.

Israel had its prophets almost from the very beginning of its recorded history. They were regarded as the spokesmen of Jehovah. They were the medium thru whom Jehovah communicated with his people. Sometimes he is the divinely appointed leader of his people, like Moses or King David, but usually he is merely the expounder and interpreter of Jehovah's will. They were originally called Seers (I Samuel 9:9), and were believed to have supernatural power in ordinary secular affairs. Saul, we are told, while searching with his servant for the lost asses of his father, sought the Seer Samuel to have him tell them where the asses could be found. All other tribes had their seers as well as did Israel. After Samuel's time, however, Israel's prophets appear to have concerned themselves only with spiritual affairs, seeking to discover, expound and foretell the will of Jehovah. Their alleged communications from Jehovah they received in dreams. In whatever they say, they speak not in their own name, but in the name of Jehovah. They usually were men of prominent individuality. They might arise from any quarter, from any class. They were not ordained as such. Female prophets are mentionel, such as Miriam, Deborah and Huldah. A number of them led hermit lives, others lived in bands or companies, and at times they were quite numerous. We are told in 1 Kings 22:6 that there were 400 of them in the time of King Ahab.

Beginning with Amos, a new order of prophets arises in Israel. There now begins the succession of canonical prophets. They appear as authors and

their writings are preserved in the Old Testament. The old order of prophets, or those prior to the time of Amos, were optimistic and believed that no matter much what else the Israelites did, so long as they worshipped no other Gods than Jehovah, He would cause them to be a great and prosperous people. Up to that time He was largely considered as a national God. Under Amos and his successors, or the new order of prophets, He becomes an absolutely righteous God and He can be Israel's God only so far as Israel recognizes and follows the right and abstains from doing wrong. The new order of prophets become pessimistic, for they believe that their people are so steeped in sin that there is no hope for them. They predict their total downfall, which becomes true when virtually all of their people are carried off into captivity. They have faith, however, that Jehovah will not utterly cast off His chosen people, but that, after sifting out the wicked, He would in the end save and restore the remnant to greater power and prosperity than they ever had.

The main characteristic of the canonical prophets of the Old Testament is that they were social reformers. They were continually seeking the will of Jehovah and expounding it to their people with the purpose of making them realize how evil they had become and of inducing them to become a better and more righteous people. To prophesy future occurrences was only an incidental power made use of by the prophets. Watching closely the trend of events and reasoning from cause to effect, they usually were remarkably correct in fortelling future events, tho sometimes they proved to be mistaken. The great

purpose of their prophesying was to warn their people of what would surely happen to them unless they mended their evil ways and cut out all wrongdoing. Seldom, however, were they very popular with their people, and their warnings were but little heeded.

Jesus, like the Old Testament prophets, was preeminently a reformer. He and John the Baptist appear to stand alone in their age who recognized and battled against the great evils existing among their people. The most religious class in the community, the Scribes and the Pharisees, had totally perverted the Jewish religion. The priests having charge of the sacrificial worship at the Temple had become so extortionate in the charges exacted from the worshippers that the Holy Temple had virtually become a den of thieves and robbers. The Roman yoke upon the people, heavy as it was, was made still more oppressive by the corrupt practices of the Jewish publicans or tax-gatherers. The people themselves had fallen to the depths of sin and degradation. John the Baptist was soon imprisoned and later beheaded, so Jesus was virtually left alone in his almost hopeless task of reform.

Who were the Scribe and Pharisees? After the restoration of the Jews to their native land and the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, and after Nehemiah and Ezra had gathered all of the Jewish laws, we first hear or read of the Scribes. They made copies of the law and became students in the law. The synagogue was a development of the exile when there was no sacrifice and no temple. The Scribes took charge of the services in the synagogue, largely consisting of the reading, teaching and ex-

pounding of the laws. The Scribes constituted a class distinct from the priests, who had charge of the sacrifice and the ceremonial worship in the Temple.

After the Greeks had subjugated Palestine many of the Jews began to imitate the more polished manners and customs of the Greeks. This introduction of foreign manners and customs soon met with much opposition. The Scribes as a whole, while they did not favor this effort to Hellenize the Jews, acted much too indifferently about it to suit some of their number. So the order of Pharisees arose among the Scribes at this time. As the word "Pharisee"—*separate*—implies, they separated themselves from, and bitterly fought, all foreign innovations and customs. In later years, after these attempted innovations had died out, there came to be but little difference between the Scribes and the Pharisees.

As the Pharisees were a new order arising out of the Scribes, the Sadducees were a new order arising out of the priest-class. The Sadducees had been almost as active in favoring, as the Pharisees were in opposing, the introduction of Grecian manners and customs. Sadduceeism in the main was a general reaction against the extremes of Pharisaism. The civil rulers of the kingdom, as a rule, were Sadducees. Many of them were quite wealthy. They denied the resurrection of the body and the existence of angels. They also denied the authority of the oral tradition on which Pharisaic doctrine was largely founded. They were far less popular with the Jewish masses than were the Pharisees.

Israel's code of laws, as contained in the Pentateuch, being general in terms, cases continually

arose to which the code was not directly applicable. To make the code in all cases applicable, it was necessary to supplement it with legal decisions, which soon became quite numerous and which in time became known as the oral or traditional law. These numerous supplemental laws and decisions in time came to be codified in what was known as the Mishnah, and soon came to be considered as of equal authority with the Pentateuchal laws. The belief soon prevailed, too, that not all the laws of their forefathers had been included in the Pentateuch, but that a number of them had been transmitted or handed down orally, and these gave rise to religious rites and practices that had no authority save that of tradition.

The Scribes and Pharisees insisted on the strict observance of a great mass of oral tradition which during the course of 400 years had accumulated as a supplement to the laws of the Pentateuch. They made godliness to consist in scrupulous regard for pious ceremonies. They laid the utmost stress on a minute external observance of many details, such as distinctions between clean and unclean food, the various washings of the hands and body needful to the ceremonial purity, the times and ways of fasting, a morbid strictness in the observance of the Sabbath, and the wearing of phringes and phylacteries. This period, just as Jesus enters upon the scene, has been aptly described as "the night of legalism." The Scribes and Pharisees had no real faith in the goodness or grace of God. They regarded Him as a severe and exacting taskmaster, and were much afraid lest by the most minute departure from the bare letter of the law they would offend Him. They were so

scrupulous in the observance of the outward forms of religion that they lost complete sight of its true inward spirit.

Jesus had the utmost sympathy with the sinful and the wayward among the lower and middle classes of the Jews. With them he felt that there was hope for reform, but he could see no hope for reform in the ruling classes. In order to open the eyes of the people and make them realize how sadly perverted their religion had become thru the baneful influences of the Scribes and Pharisees, he felt it necessary to pronounce the severest condemnation upon the latter. "You honor God with your lips," he tells them, "but your worship is all in vain, as you teach not the precepts of God but the precepts of men. Outwardly you appear righteous unto men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. You cleanse the outside of the cup and the platter, but within you are full of extortion and wickedness. You love the chief place at feasts, the chief seats in the synagogue, the salutations in the market places, and to be called of men, Rabbi. You are like unto whited sepulchres which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?"

Jesus incurred the bitter enmity of the Scribes and Pharisees not alone because of his severe arraignment of them, but also because of his efforts to put an end to their corrupt rites and practices. He likewise incurred the enmity of the Sadducees and the ruling powers mainly because of his interfering with their practices of extortion in the Temple. All

of them conspired the taking of his life and they succeeded in prevailing on the Roman authorities to have him put to death.

After Jesus' time other prophets arose in Israel. In the 21st chapter of Acts mention is made of the prophet Agabus, also of the four daughters of the evangelist Philip, who are said to have prophesied. In Acts 15:32 mention is made of the prophets Judas and Silas.

CHAPTER II.

Jesus the Messiah.

The original meaning of the word Messiah in Hebrew was "anointed" or "anointed one." When a king or priest was invested with his office, it was a part of the Hebrew ceremony to anoint him with oil. We read in the Old Testament of the anointing of Saul when he became king of Israel. David was anointed when he was made king and so was Solomon. Their early kings were believed by the Hebrews to have been selected for them by their god Jehovah. He was regarded as Jehoah's vice-regent on earth. The spirit of Jehovah rested on him. A sacred meaning in time came to be attached to the word Messiah. During their many years of foreign oppression the word Messiah came to be used by them to designate the future, and as they believed the promised, deliverer or saviour of their people.

Their early sacred writings and traditions told them that Jehovah had promised the progenitors of their race that he would make them a great and prosperous people. During the reigns of David and Solomon they did enjoy national prosperity. But, excepting these and a few more rare and brief intervals, they had been thruout their history a sorely afflicted people. They were slaves in a foreign land, they were wanderers for forty years in a barren wilderness, for several generations they were at almost continuous war with neighboring tribes in Palestine, they were rent in twain by a civil war, again and

again they were subdued by foreign powers and compelled to pay heavy tribute, their chief city and temple were destroyed, they were torn from their homes and carried off captives, and they were exiles in Babylonia for 60 years. It wasn't long after their restoration to their native land when they again became a subject people. They were continuously kept under cruel and oppressive yokes of foreign powers up and well into the second century of the Christian era. During the reign of the Roman emperor Hadrian in the year 135 A. D., they came to an inglorious end as a nation. The city of Jerusalem was destroyed, 985 villages scattered thru Palestine were made desolate, and their inhabitants, such as were not slain, were made to suffer indignities and cruelties most barbarous and unhuman, thousands of their wives and daughters being ravished. They were dispersed and they have remained outcasts ever since, scattered all over the world.

When we think of it, their history presents so sad a picture that it appears unbelievable that they should have been God's own chosen people and under His direct and provident guidance. It is a reproach upon our God to believe that He should have chosen a particular people, should have promised to make them a great and prosperous nation, and then should have so signally failed in guiding them along righteous paths, failed in His alleged promises, and should have permitted them under the most revolting circumstances to come to so disastrous an end.

It is quite natural that the Jews should have been continually looking for a Messiah. You take a people who believe in a particular god as god of their

people only, a people who believe they had been promised to be made a prosperous and powerful nation, and you would naturally expect that this people will be continually looking forward to a divine fulfillment of that promise. At times more particularly when misfortune besets them and other nations oppress them, they will constantly be expecting a deliverer sent by their god who will set them free. This is exactly what the Jews did, so there is nothing at all strange in their continually looking for and expecting for centuries the coming of a Messiah, or another David who would deliver them from all foreign oppression. That the Old Testament therefore is full of all manner of prophecies concerning the coming and the nature of the Messiah is not at all remarkable. It would be remarkable if under the circumstances it were not so.

Were the many prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the expected Messiah fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth? Did they turn out to be true prophecies? They surely ought to have, if the Old Testament writings were divinely inspired. However, not all of them could possibly have turned out to be true prophecies, for they are not consistent with one another. They give us decidedly varying conceptions of the expected Messiah. Some of the prophets set him forth as a victorious and triumphant conqueror who will grind the enemies of Israel under his feet. Others set him forth as a suffering Messiah who will bring salvation to Israel entirely thru peaceful means. Still others indicate that Jehovah himself will come down on earth, destroy their enemies and himself take up the government of the Jews.

Varying as the Old Testament prophecies are, not a single one of them gives us a true picture of Jesus as he is represented in the New Testament. Those that foretell or imply a mere temporal ruler of course cannot apply to Jesus. Even the few prophecies that speak of a suffering Messiah and of one who will bring salvation to the Jews and to the world thru peaceful means, came far from portraying the Jesus of the New Testament. In a few minor details they seem to have correctly foretold certain incidents happening in his career. These we will take up in the next paragraph. The Gospel story of Jesus in its main essential features is entirely different from all that is said concerning the Messiah in the old Testament. In no single prophecy can Jesus be said to have been present to the mental eye of the prophet making any prediction of the expected Messiah.

Soon after Christianity had spread among the Gentiles, very little being then known concerning the life of Jesus while on earth, forty or more years having elapsed since his death, the early Christians diligently searched the Scriptures to find all the prophecies concerning the Messiah, believing that all of them had been fulfilled in Jesus. So we have reason to believe that the life of Jesus was clothed with a number of incidents, not because they were known to have actually occurred, but because the Christians believed they must have occurred in order to fulfill Old Testament prophecies. For example, the unlikely story that the clothing of Jesus was divided by lot among the Roman soldiers after the crucifixion. This incident came to be inserted in the Gospels for the reason that the early Christians sincerely be-

lieved it to have actually occurred in fulfillment of the passage in Psalms 22:18: "They part my garments among them, and upon my vesture do they cast lots." For a similar reason the Gospels state when Jesus made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem he rode upon an ass, or upon a colt as stated by Mark. The Christians believed he must have done so because of the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9: "Rejoice greatly, oh daughter of Zion; shout, oh daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy king cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass."

The prophecies in the Old Testament relative to the Messiah are as a rule expressed in language of vague and obscure meaning. Had they been divinely inspired they would have been clearly expressed, with no doubt as to their meaning. Many of them are enigmatic in form and capable of just about as many interpretations as were wont to be the Delphian oracles of old.

When we read all that is said in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah, we gather a strong impression that he is intended to become the deliverer or saviour of his own people only, the Jews. One or two of the Old Testament prophets more or less expressly state that he will be the saviour of all mankind, but it is very evident from their writings that even they believed that the promised Messiah would be first and foremost the deliverer of their own people. How can we possibly regard Jesus as the Messiah or saviour of the Jews? Much the larger portion of them never did believe in him. The Christian Jews probably at no time constituted more than

one-twentieth the population of Palestine. In a comparatively short time after Jesus' death, practically all of them, no doubt with sincerity, renounced all faith in his divinity and messiahship. Up to this day the entire Jewish race, almost without exception, do not believe in him.

The Christian doctrine expressly sets forth that all those who do not believe in Jesus as being the Christ shall be damned (Mark 16:16), and the wrath of God abideth on them (John 4:36). In place then of the Old Testament prophecies having been fulfilled in Jesus, we find this difference between the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament the Messiah is set forth as the saviour of the Jewish race. In the New Testament he is set forth, in the person of Jesus Christ, not as their saviour, but virtually as condemning them because of their want of faith in him.

Like all the people of his time and race, Jesus of Nazareth believed in the coming of the Messiah, and that his coming was nigh. It is stated in the Gospels that he began his public ministry by declaring, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." To a large majority of Jews the kingdom of heaven was just another term for the kingdom of Jehovah. The establishment on earth of the kingdom of Jehovah to them meant the conquering and driving out of their foes, the Romans, the banishment of all oppression and the inauguration of an era of peace and prosperity. The establishment of a national kingdom with a king of the lineage of David on the throne, this is what the great body of Jews were looking for and expecting with the coming of the Messiah. Jesus of

Nazareth evidently had a quite different view of the nature and purpose of the expected Messiah. He was a student of the prophets and like them, or at least some of them, he believed that the expected Messiah would establish on earth a kingdom of righteousness, inflicting punishment on all wickedness whether found in Jew or Gentile. He fully realized that the mere restoration of national power to the Jews, with the banishment of all worldly oppression, would not make them a better or more worthy people, but more likely would increase the wickedness and corruption that then prevailed among them.

We are not told just when the Nazarene became convinced that Jehovah intended him to be the Messiah. He had been preceded by John the Baptist in proclaiming that the kingdom of Jehovah was at hand. After the Baptist's imprisonment he virtually became his successor in the effort to reform the Jewish people and calling them to repentance. It must have gradually dawned on him that he was intended to be the Messiah. Circumstances there were no doubt of which we know nothing that confirmed him in this belief. The first evidence we have of it in the Gospels is a conversation reported to have taken place between him and his disciples in Caesarea Philippi. He asked them, "Who do men say that I am?" This was followed by the query, "But who say ye that I am?" The answer of Peter was, "Thou art the Messiah." Jesus is said to have asked them not to tell it to any man. It appears that later when his kinsmen heard that he regarded himself as the Messiah they could not refrain from saying, "He is beside himself" (Mark 3:21), and they tried "to lay

hold on him," doubtless with the view of taking him home and trying to dissuade him from his, what they believed, rash and irrational purpose.

There was nothing at all strange in the Nazarene believing himself to be the Messiah. Both before and after his time there were men who believed themselves to be such. Some of them had more immediate followers than did he. From all that we find in the Old Testament the Messiah was not regarded or expected to be a divine being. Nor was there anything strange in his believing that he was sent from or selected by Jehovah to be the deliverer of his people. Jehovah had selected their first leader, Moses; He had selected their first kings, Saul and David, and it was believed that He would at the proper time select for them a Messiah. Jesus fully realized to what depths of sin the Jews of his time had fallen. "A faithless and perverse generation" and "a generation of vipers" he at times called them. He well saw that the Romans were not their only oppressors. The Jews were being robbed by their own people, by the tax gatherers and by those who practiced extortion in their sacrificial worship. Their sacred Temple had become a den of thieves. All the social evils had become rampant among them. The whole Jewish religion had become sadly perverted by the Scribes and Pharisees. Jesus well saw, as we believe, that a Messiah such as the Jews were looking for, a worldly ruler who would restore a Jewish kingdom, would not make the people more righteous, but would likely make them still more worldly and corrupt. The only hope for the nation lay in reform, thoro reform, and that Jesus felt would

have to be the work of the Messiah. To bring condemnation upon the Pharisees, to drive the extortioners out of the Temple, to bring back the religion on its true basis, to free the people from all impurities, to convince them that Jehovah, in place of being a cruel taskmaster, was their loving Father; to establish the kingdom of God, not without, but within the human heart, these were the duties that would fall within the province of the Messiah to fulfill. If with God's help he could accomplish all this, he truly would be the Messiah or saviour of his people.

Jesus regarded himself the Messiah evidently in the sense as gathering up in himself the various lines of Old Testament hopes and promises. The Gospels state that on different occasions he read Scriptural passages from Isaiah and Zechariah pertaining to the expected Messiah and that he applied them to himself. He must have been deeply impressed with the 53rd chapter of Isaiah and the 22nd chapter of Psalms in which the Messiah is set forth as a sufferer, as despised and rejected of men, as having the iniquity of all his people laid upon him, as pouring out his soul unto death whereby he bare the sins of many and made intercession for the transgressors. Jesus must have believed that in him as the Messiah these prophecies would be fulfilled and that he would meet with a violent death. He had reason to become confirmed in this belief from the growing hostile feeling against him on the part of the ruling powers in Jerusalem. He doubtless saw that the bitter enmity of the Pharisees and members of the sanhedrim would end in nothing short of his death. At various times in the presence of his disciples he is said to

have foretold that he would be killed and that on the third day he would rise again. And yet it would seem that before final death came to him, he fully expected that Jehovah would in some way intervene in his behalf, for there certainly was bitter disappointment expressed in his last words on the cross as given in both Matthew and Mark: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

The Nazarene's conception of himself as the Messiah was altogether different from the conception of Jesus as now held by the Christian church. The Christian doctrine is that Jesus is "Very God" or part of the godhead. Jesus believed that he was simply the chosen servant of God. We are told in Matthew 12:17 that he applied to himself the words of the prophet as spoken in Isaiah 42:1, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles." The Christian doctrine of expiation and atonement did not originate with Jesus, nor did he at any time even intimate that our salvation depended on our faith in him as our divine Saviour.

The Christians regard Jesus as the Saviour of all mankind. Jesus regarded himself as the Messiah or saviour of his own people only. According to Matthew 10:5, when he sends forth his disciples to make converts, he charges them, "Go not into any way of the Gentiles and enter not into any city of the Samaritans." And in Matthew 15:24 he says, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." His alleged command to his disciples as given in Matt. 28:19, "Go ye therefore and make dis-

ciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," cannot be correct and must have been a subsequent insertion, for it is directly contrary to what he said or commanded on other occasions. That he gave no such command to his disciples is proved also by the fact that after his death they for a time insisted that a Gentile must first become a proselyte to Judaism before he could become a Christian. That Jesus did not take a world view of the messiahship is further evidenced in Matthew 19:28, where he is reported to have said, "When the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye (his disciples) also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." He thus plainly intimates that when the kingdom of Jehovah shall come, it will be strictly a Jewish kingdom.

To Jesus alone can we look for a correct conception of the Messiah. His conception differed from that of the Jews who centered in the Messiah all hope for the material prosperity of their nation. His conception differed from that of the Christians, who regarded the Messiah as the Son of God, Very God or substantially one with God, who came on earth to redeem the whole human family from sin by the shedding of his blood in a cruel death, to ransom us from Satan and in satisfaction of divine justice, as we shall see in the following chapter. Jesus considered himself the Messiah, not as "Very God," but as the chosen servant of God, whose mission was to teach his people the error of their ways and bring them to repentance. He appears to have had in

mind the redemption of his own people only, but his teachings so very much surpassed all that had ever been before taught, that they came gradually to be accepted by the whole civilized world, and so he truly became the Messiah of mankind.

CHAPTER III.

The Vicarious Atonement.

According to Christian belief, sin entered into the world thru the disobedience of the first man, Adam, and in consequence of sin man became separated from God. According to the doctrine of the vicarious atonement, a reconciliation has taken place between God and man thru or by means of the earthly life, sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son," says Paul in Romans 5:10. The Christians maintain, however, that this reconciliation will be of no avail to the individual unless he places implicit faith in the redeeming blood of Jesus and accepts him as his Saviour.

All Christians agree that Jesus thru his death has enabled God to forgive sinners, but just in what way Jesus' death fulfilled this purpose, there has been much difference of opinion. Origen and Irenaeus, two of the more prominent of the apostolic fathers, maintained that mankind in consequence of our first parents' disobedience, had fallen under the dominion of Satan and that Jesus by his sufferings and death paid a ransom to Satan in order that we might be freed from his power. They held that Christ could have delivered us from the dominion of Satan by his own power, but that justice required that Satan be paid a ransom, and that as a ransom he demanded Christ's own life. To satisfy Satan's demands Christ became human, for it was only as a human being

that he could give up his life. This was also the belief held by St. Augustine and this was in fact the doctrine of the Christian church as to the atonement for more than a thousand years.

Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury and the greatest theologian of his age, was the author of quite a different theory. He was a Roman, and like all Romans, he was a great stickler after the law. He based his theory on the law of debt and payment. His theory of the atonement was that of "satisfaction." He maintained that the payment was made to God and not to the devil. Satan had nothing to do with it. He defined sin as not paying to God what we owe him. Whenever a man disobeys God he incurs the guilt of sin, and the honor and justice of God require satisfaction more than mere punishment. Repentance is not a sufficient remedy. Man sinning against the infinite God is infinitely guilty and his sin cannot be atoned for save by an infinite satisfaction. No one but God can pay such a debt, therefore Jesus became God-man. But why, it may be asked, the necessity for the death of Jesus? Why could not the life alone atone? Here we reach the most original part of Anselm's theory. Christ, says Anselm, could not make satisfaction to God by his life, however perfect, because as a man he was bound always to do right. That was all he could do, to live right, so there was no merit to spare. Nothing could be gained then by his life. Not so with his death. This, which in the case of other men, is the judicial consequence of sin, is, in the case of Christ, a voluntary offering or sacrifice not due to God, but which Jesus freely gives in exchange for the for-

giveness of man. This is the infinite satisfaction which secures the salvation of man.

The Anselm theory of the atonement prevailed in the Christian world till the time of the Reformation. The views of our modern theologians, while they vary considerably, are in the main amplifications or modifications of the Anselm theory. There are those among them who represent the sufferings and death of Jesus as a satisfaction due to the honour of God; there are others who represent his sufferings and death as a penalty demanded by God's justice, and not a few of them go back to the original view and represent the atoning character of his death as a ransom to redeem men from Satan.

The doctrine of the atonement is based on the fall of our first parents. The mystic Garden of Eden story is an ancient Chaldean allegory designed to account for the introduction and presence of sin and evil in the world. In it we have a speaking serpent and God walking in a human way in the cool of the day in the garden. The difficulties of taking it as literal history are so great that many distinguished and so-called orthodox theologians construe it as having a figurative meaning. But if it is not to be taken literally, what becomes of the precise act of disobedience and the fall, and what necessity was there for the atonement? It is said that Adam and Eve were free agents and that God could not interfere to save them from the wiles of Satan. But such free agency as Adam and Eve had was a delusion. They were free agents in the sense that you would call infants such. The Genesis account itself says that they did not know good from evil, or right from

wrong. They were no match for the tempter in whom was the embodiment of guile and treachery. It may be asked, did not God make Adam? Did he not place him in circumstances where he knew he would fall? He pronounced his creation good and yet the crowning mark of His creation in a very brief time turned out to be anything else but good. The disobedience of our first parents was no greater than any ordinary violation of God's laws by innocent children, and yet this disobedience, we are told, caused the downfall and ruin of the whole human race. It seems sacrilegious to believe that our God would inflict a punishment so altogether out of proportion to the wrong committed. If we resign our belief in the fall of Adam, we must resign our belief in the vicarious atonement, as the two are indissolubly connected.

The belief that Jesus offered himself as an atoning sacrifice was a natural development from the then Jewish mode of worship, which largely consisted of sacrifices of living victims. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the 9th chapter makes an argument that the blood of Christ under the new covenant has much more of a redeeming power than had the blood of goats and of calves under the old covenant, and that the latter was anticipatory of the former.

Sacrificial worship was not original with the Hebrews. It was the usual mode of worship in primitive times. A sacrifice primarily is a meal or repast offered to the Diety. It usually was burnt so that the sweet savour might arise in the shape of food for the god. "It is an offering made by fire of a

sweet savour unto Jehovah" (Leviticus 3:5). Occasionally sacrifices were offered to pay homage and give thanks to the Deity, sometimes they were offered to win the favor of the Deity in some particular undertaking, but the great underlying motive in most sacrifices offered was to appease the wrath of the Deity, incurred because of man's sins and shortcomings. Shed blood was believed to be an offering specially gratifying to the tribal god. The party making the offering was supposed to offer on the altar something of special value to himself. The greater the value, the more pleasing it would be to the Deity. What is more valuable than human life and what life is more precious than that of a son or daughter? So parents in some countries were wont to offer a child in sacrifice. The Hebrew prophets condemned human sacrifices, and yet there were times when human victims were offered in sacrifice even by the Hebrews. Abraham must have been acquainted with the practice when he intended to offer his son Isaac on an altar in Moriah. Jepthah must have been acquainted with the practice when in fulfillment of a vow he offered for a burnt-offering his only daughter. In Jeremiah 7:31 and in 2 Kings 17:17 we read that there were times when it became more or less common for the children of both Judah and Israel "to burn their sons and daughters in the fire." The sacrifice of royal children was deemed especially efficacious. The king of Moab one time offered his oldest son as a burnt offering (2 Kings 3:27). Ahaz, one of the kings of Judah, had his son burnt on the altar of sacrifice (2 Kings 16:3), and so did Manasseh, one of the kings of Israel (2 Kings

21:6). These practices, whenever mentioned in the Old Testament, are always condemned. But we must remember that the many warnings and condemnations of their prophets were usually but little heeded by the Jews. Human victims were that often offered by them in sacrifice that it is reasonable to infer that the most efficacious sacrifice that could be offered, the most pleasing to Jehovah, they believed to be that of a human life.

As we observed in a previous article, the Jewish sacrificial mode of worship was not approved of by several of the Old Testament prophets. They fully believed that the shedding of blood on the altar of sacrifice was displeasing to Jehovah. Samuel says, "Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15:22). We quote from the first chapter of Isaiah: "What unto me is the multitude of your sacrifices? saith Jehovah. I have had enough of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats, ... yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear, your hands are full of blood." In Psalms 40:6 we read, "Sacrifice and offering Thou (Jehovah) hast no delight in." In Hosea 6:6 we find, "For I desire goodness and not sacrifice."

The doctrine of atonement, then, grew out of and was founded on the ancient Jewish sacrificial mode of worship that had already been discredited by the better class of Israel's prophets. The belief that the shed blood of Jesus atoned for man's sins was based on and had its origin in the suppoed efficacy of the Jewish bloody offerings which Israel's own prophets

claimed were not approved of by Jehovah. That the new belief is based on the old is directly stated in the Epistle to the Hebrews, 9th chapter. If the doctrine of the atonement is based on a false premise, then it must itself be false.

If Jesus, the Son of God, was crucified by some of the descendants of Adam, in place of this appeasing God's wrath or of satisfying justice, would not a more reasonable inference be that it would have increased the wrath of God or made the satisfaction of justice still more difficult? It has been well said: "Justice never finds satisfaction in the punishment of innocence, no matter if the innocent party does offer himself of his own accord to be punished." Another has said: "If God is infinite love, there can be no anger to appease." Another asks the question: "How were all the good men and women of old, truly penitent for their sins, saved before Jesus offered himself an atoning sacrifice? If they were forgiven, why is an atonement necessary now?" And it may be added, if the self-sacrifice of Jesus brings salvation to those who believe in him, does not this necessarily imply unjust discrimination shown against the millions who lived before Jesus' time and the millions since who have had no opportunity of believing in and accepting him as their Saviour?

What the views of Jesus himself were on this important subject it is difficult to determine. The same as on a number of other subjects, we can from the Gospels quote words of his that appear in favor of, and we can quote other words of his that appear against, the doctrine in question. It is another proof of what we have previously maintained, namely, that

the Gospels at later periods received additions to, or slight modifications of, their texts so as to make the texts conform with later beliefs of the early Christians. Unquestionably strong proof in favor of the atonement is furnished by the institution of the Eucharist or Lord's Supper. There are, however, a number of variances found in the several accounts of it, and there are other difficulties which detract from the importance this sacrament is given in the Gospels. The exact words of Jesus spoken in the administration of this sacrament we should think would be of the utmost significance and that care would have been taken to preserve the exact words used. They differ, however, in all of the Gospels and all differ from the words as given by Paul in 1 Cor. 11:23-26. A phrase of much importance, "unto remission of sins," is given in only one of them (Matt. 26:28), and is omitted in the others. Matthew alone has the injunctions, after the delivery of the bread and the cup, "Eat" and "Drink ye all of it," while Mark has simply, "and they all drank of it" (Mark 14:23). A close examination of the texts will show a number of other slight variances.

Bread and wine had always been used by the Jews as an offering to Jehovah of the fruits of the earth. Religious meals were common among them, in which there was a solemn benediction of the bread and cup, followed at the close of the meal by a prayer of thanksgiving. What is now termed the Eucharist was the meal or feast of the Passover which Jesus partook of with his disciples shortly before his crucifixion. What made it specially memor-

able to the disciples was that it was the last meal they had with their master.

The meal of the Passover, partaken of by Jesus with his disciples shortly before his death, and on which the Eucharist was founded, is an ancient Jewish feast. It was instituted to commemorate the escape of the Hebrews when Jehovah, smiting the first born of the Egyptians, passed over the houses of the Israelites that were marked with the blood of the paschal lamb. Under the Old Covenant of Jehovah with the Hebrews, the Passover became their main annual feast, the essential feature of which was the offering of the paschal lamb. Under the New Covenant, as previously stated, the celebration of the Eucharist took the place of the feast of the Passover, and the shed blood of Jesus took the place of the offering of the paschal lamb.

Thus we find that the Eucharist, or the Lord's Supper, is founded not only on the bloody sacrificial worship of the Jews, but is also based on an ancient Jewish legend, the incredible story of Jehovah cruelly slaying the innocent first-born in every single family thruout Egypt simply because King Pharaoh would not permit the Hebrews to leave the country.

Jesus believing himself to be the Messiah, a suffering Messiah, as portrayed in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, must have felt that he would meet with death because of the transgressions and iniquities of his people. From many of his teachings a reasonable inference is that he fully believed he was giving his life, not to reconcile God to man, but to reconcile man to God. When man disobeys God's commands he naturally feels that he has displeased Him. The

feeling produced in him, because of his sins, is one of estrangement and alienation from his God. The purpose of Jesus was to remove that feeling of estrangement by impressing on the minds of men God's infinite love. The Christian theologians have all along maintained that the reconciliation was an effect produced on the mind of God, but Jesus evidently felt that it was an effect produced on the mind of man. God's character is not changed by anything man can do. His character is unchangeable.

There are a number of teachings of Jesus given in the Gospels which necessarily imply that he did not consider a vicarious atonement at all necessary for the remission of man's sins. Repentance he frequently makes the sole condition for the forgiveness of sins. To his disciples he said, "whosoever's sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them." In his Lord's prayer we have, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." Jesus here makes the forgiveness of sins solely dependent on man's penitent disposition and his willingness to forgive others. It in no wise presupposes, as a condition, a propitiation of God or satisfaction of justice by a substitutional atonement. The pure in heart and the meek in spirit, he says, shall see God and theirs is the kingdom of heaven—no atonement necessary for them. In his parable of the prodigal son his purpose was to impress on our minds that God is our Father, who waits for us erring children to return to Him even as the father of the prodigal son waited. Obedience, a pure heart, service, repentance for past sins and forgiveness of others, are made the sole prere-

quisites for our salvation. That faith in the redeeming power of the shed blood of Jesus is our only hope of salvation, was purely of human invention in the dark days of superstition.

The doctrine of the vicarious atonement is founded on three things which we cannot endorse:

First. The garden of Eden myth and the alleged curse pronounced against our first parents for eating of the forbidden fruit, involving the curse of their descendants to this day.

Second. The bloody sacrifices of the Jews, which were condemned by even some of Israel's own prophets.

Third. The offering of the paschal lamb at the feast of the Passover in commemoration of an alleged event which could not possibly have occurred because of its barbarous cruelty.

CHAPTER IV

The Virgin Birth

The Gospels of the New Testament give us two different views with regard to the nativity of Jesus. The first chapters of both Matthew and Luke inform us that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of a virgin. In many other parts of the Gospels it is set forth that he was the son of Joseph and through Joseph a direct lineal descendant from David. It is hardly necessary to state that if he was miraculously born without a human father, he could not have had any of Joseph's blood in him and could not have been through Joseph of the lineage of David. Both of these views cannot be correct. One or the other must be wrong.

The Jews were not agreed as to the nature and character of the long expected Messiah, but a large majority of them believed that he would be a mere temporal ruler and a lineal descendant of David. Their nation had attained the zenith of its greatness and prosperity under the rule of David and they were longing for another David to appear. Another and probably the principal reason why they were looking for another David was because of Jehovah's supposed covenant with him that He would build the house of David into an everlasting dynasty, as stated in 2 Samuels 7:12, 13: "I (Jehovah) will set up thy (David's) seed after thee, that shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."

After Jesus came to be regarded as the Messiah, the genealogies as given in Matthew and Luke were prepared to establish his lineage from David through his father Joseph. If Jesus had been born of a virgin, without a human father, if he had not been begotten of Joseph, just as Isaac was begotten of Abraham or as Jacob was begotten of Isaac, he could not have been descended from David, and these genealogies would have been of no significance whatever. Doesn't it appear very evident, then, that at the time these genealogies were placed in and made part of the gospels of Matthew and of Luke, there could have been no belief in and no knowledge of the virgin birth.

In Matthew 1:16 the genealogy reads: "And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." That such was not the original reading is shown by the recent discovery of the Sinaitic Syrian Gospels, which are the earliest of all known witnesses to the Scripture text, and herein Matthew 1:16 is given as follows: "And Jacob begat Joseph and Joseph, to whom was espoused Mary the virgin, begat Jesus." Here it is specifically stated that Joseph begat Jesus. Even in this the earliest of all known texts it is a question whether the clause, "To whom was espoused Mary the virgin" was not a subsequent insertion. In the genealogical table given in Luke, Jesus' lineage is given as "being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph." The phrase "as was supposed" was placed in parenthesis, evidently because there was good ground for believing that it was not in the text originally but was likewise a subsequent insertion. It is

sometimes claimed that Jesus was a lineal descendant of David through his mother Mary. Both Matthew and Luke, however, trace his genealogy back to David, not through his mother, but through his father. Moreover, it was the custom among the Hebrews to trace an ancestry through the male line.

The genealogies, then, as given in Matthew and Luke, plainly prove that Jesus was originally regarded as having been ordinarily born like other men, that Joseph was his actual father and that through Joseph he was a lineal descendant of David. A reasonable inference is that the virgin birth doctrine was not the original belief and that it must have had a subsequent origin in tradition.

If the Holy Ghost, and not man, was the father of Jesus, if his birth was heralded by angels and all the other wonderful events accompanying his nativity were true as recorded in the first chapters of Matthew and Luke, we would naturally suppose that they made so lasting an impression on his parents, Joseph and Mary, that they never would have lost sight of them as long as they lived. But, on the contrary, all subsequent events as narrated in the gospels plainly show that, if they really occurred, the parents had in a short time entirely forgotten them. Only six weeks after Jesus' birth, Joseph and Mary marveled at Simeon's discourse in the Temple, declaring him to be the Christ. Why should they have marveled at what they already must have known. When he was twelve years of age his parents found him sitting in the midst of the doctors,

hearing them and asking them questions, and again they were amazed. His own mother does not seem to know that he had no human father for she represents Joseph as his father. "Thy father Joseph and I have sought thee sorrowing," she says, when they find him after he had been lost in the Temple. His mother and his brethren not only seem altogether unconscious of any unwonted circumstance in connection with his life, but "they did not believe in him" (John 7:5) and were skeptical as to his messianic claims. At one time his friends and kinsmen even tried to lay hold on him and take him to his home, alleging that he was beside himself (Mark 3: 21 and 31). All this is the strongest kind of evidence, the more conclusive because it is indirect, that his parents knew nothing of the virgin birth.

Thruout the entire New Testament no mention is made of the immaculate conception, save in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Mark and John make no mention of it. It is not even alluded to by Matthew and Luke except in their first chapters. If these two chapters were dropped out, nowhere else in the New Testament is there an assertion or an obvious and unambiguous implication of the virgin birth. Jesus himself never refers to it. Mark could not have known of it, for he not only implies but plainly asserts that Jesus was the son of Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth. Paul refutes it when he states in Romans 1:3, "Concerning his son our Lord who *was born of the seed of David* according to the flesh." When Peter on the day of Pentecost is urging upon his hearers that Jesus is the promised Messiah, he

bases one of his chief arguments on the fact that Jesus is the son of David—"of the fruit of his loins" are his words (Acts 2:30). And if it be not true that Jesus was descended from David in the male line, according to Hebrew custom, all the Pentateuchal reasoning of Peter falls to the ground. Plainly these opening chapters of Matthew and of Luke originally were not integral parts of the Gospels, but were written and inserted after belief in the virgin birth began to prevail among the Christians.

The two accounts of the nativity of Jesus as given in the introductory chapters of Matthew and Luke are quite different stories. They agree on only two points, that he was born of a virgin and that he was born in Bethlehem. In all other particulars they have nothing in common. In Matthew it is the angel of the Lord who appears, in Luke the angel Gabriel; in Matthew the angel appears to Joseph, in Luke he appears to Mary; in Matthew the angel is only an apparition appearing to Joseph in a dream, in Luke the angel actually appears in human form to Mary while she is awake. It does not necessarily follow that these two accounts contradict one another in this, for angels may have appeared to both Mary and Joseph, though it does strike one as strange that Luke should mention only the appearance to Mary and Matthew mention only the appearance to Joseph, and that the nature of the appearances should be entirely different, an actual appearance in the one and only a dream in the other. But there is one point in their accounts in which

Matthew and Luke absolutely are at variance. According to Matthew the home of Joseph and Mary at the time of Jesus' birth was in Bethlehem. It was only after their return from Egypt, when they were afraid to go back to Bethlehem because Archelaus, son of Herod, was king, that they went up north into Galilee and "dwelt in a city called Nazareth." According to Luke the home of Joseph and Mary was at Nazareth from the very first, the birth occurring at Bethlehem simply because the parents had gone there to be taxed.

Luke's account of the alleged miraculous birth is poetical in character throughout. Mary gives utterance to a long song in making her announcement to Elizabeth, a second long poem is recited by Zacharias, a third song is sung by a multitude of angels while appearing at night before some shepherds who were out in a field keeping watch over their flock, and still another song is recited by Simeon when the child Jesus is brought by his parents into the Temple. The whole story you would naturally classify, not as historical, but as a highly poetic and imaginative production.

After the angel announces to Mary that she shall have a son conceived by the Holy Ghost, Mary travels some distance and goes to Elizabeth to apprize her of it. The news causes Elizabeth to make a long speech and Mary then gives utterance to a long poem of 140 words. The long speech made by each could not have been taken down verbatim as they were spoken. How were they preserved? The nature of the long speeches are just what we would expect in a poetic production, but they are not what

we naturally would suppose were the utterances of Elizabeth and Mary under the circumstance.

The appearance of the angel Gabriel before Mary to announce the coming birth of her son, appears highly improbable from the very words which the angel is said to have uttered. These are his words: "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1:32, 33.) This alleged announcement of the angel is purely Jewish in character. The Son's reign, in place of extending over all mankind, is confined to the house of Jacob, or Israel. In place of foretelling the coming of the Christian Messiah who would give his life as an atoning sacrifice for men's sins, the angel's message is in full accord with the Jewish expectation of a national Messiah, who was to be of the lineage of David and of whose Davidic dynasty there was to be no end.

The nativity of Jesus as related in Matthew is just as improbable as that in Luke. In truth the account is on a much lower plane than that in Luke. The birth story is more physical and sensual. That in Luke was probably the production of an educated Christian convert of Rome, who had the poetic talent of an Ovid or Horace. That in Matthew appears to be the production of a Jew, for he takes special pains to make the incidents of his story con-

form with the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament.

In Matthew's account we have a touch of oriental mysticism as seen in the heralding of the star and in the procession of the Magi who come from the East to Jerusalem, saying: "Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we saw his star in the East and are come to worship him. Astrology, largely believed in at the beginning of the Christian era, is now discredited as a false science, but the belief was general then that stars are always the forerunners of great events.

When the virgin birth of Jesus became the accepted belief among the Christians, for the purpose of confirming their belief, the Old Testament Scriptures were searched to see whether the virgin birth had not been foretold by the prophets. A number of incidents connected with the birth, as described in the first two chapters of Matthew, had their origin quite probably in supposed fulfillments of prophecy. The account of the wise men following a star to Jerusalem and there asking, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" had its origin in prophecies of Jeremiah and in a prophecy of Balaam (Numbers 24:17). Joseph is believed to have fled with Mary and the babe into Egypt, a very unlikely thing for him to have done, so as to fulfill a prophecy made by Hosea, namely: "Out of Egypt did I call my son." King Herod is believed to have slain all the children, two years old and under, in and around Bethlehem, an alleged event nowhere else mentioned, that there might be fulfilled the words of Jeremiah the prophet, as follows: "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping

and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she would not be comforted, because they are not." When you read these and other incidents in the life of Jesus, alleged to have occurred in order that "it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets" the impression they leave on your mind is that in place of prophecy foretelling history, history is adapted to prophecy.

The virgin birth was believed by the early Christians to have been foretold in the prophecy given in Isaiah 7:14, as follows: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you (King Ahaz) a sign: behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." When we read in Isaiah what goes before and what follows the above quoted passage, it appears very evident that the birth the prophet had in mind was a birth that was to happen not centuries afterward, but within a short time and within the lifetime of King Ahaz. Of what avail would the sign be to Ahaz, of what benefit could it possibly be to him, if it were not to occur until 400 years afterward? That the child was to be named Immanuel, meaning "God is with us," has no particular significance. Their name for God appears in a good many Hebrew names. Moreover Jesus was not named Immanuel. We find, too, that in the original Hebrew text, the word that has been translated "virvin," does not strictly mean a virgin. Its literal meaning is, a young woman, and it has been so translated wherever else the word occurs in the Old Testament. Had a virgin really been meant, we would find in the original text the same Hebrew word that is used in

the original text of Genesis 24:16, and which is the proper Hebrew word for "virgin."

Not only is there no mention made of the virgin birth of Jesus in the New Testament, outside of the first chapters of Matthew and of Luke, but it is also a significant fact that no mention is made of it in the Christian literature that immediately followed the gospels and Epistles of the New Testament. Not a word do we find about the miraculous birth either in the Epistles of Clement, the Pastor of Hermas, the Epistle to Diognetus, or in any of the other writings contained in the volume known as the Apostolic Fathers, not until we come to the very last one in the volume, the Epistle of St. Ignatius, who makes one single brief reference to it. And this brief reference may be an interpolation, for nowhere else does Ignatius make mention of it. Being that the Apostolic Fathers, excepting Ignatius, make not the slightest mention of it, a plain inference is that they did not know of it and that the belief in it had not yet arisen.

The virgin-birth story became the accepted belief among the early Christians not until about 120 A. D., or nearly 100 years after Jesus' death. Justin Martyr, who was of Greek descent, was the first of the Fathers of the Church who dwelt on it in his writings. He quotes a number of passages from the Old Testament, in addition to those referred to in Matthew, which he declares plainly foretold the miraculous birth of Jesus. He claims that the person whom Daniel saw in his vision (Daniel 7:13) was Christ,

and that when Daniel says that he was *"like* unto a son of man" it necessarily implied that he was *different* from the sons of men in that he "could not have been born of human seed."

Ostensibly to make the child still more immaculate, one of the apocryphal gospels claimed that Mary, his mother, had also been born of a virgin, and that in her early childhood she was brought to the Temple by her parents, where she remained till her 12th year, visited and fed by angels and honored by divine visions.

It is a singular fact that the founders of several religions, other than the Christian, are believed to have been of supernatural origin. Buddha, the great founder of Buddhism, was believed, before Jesus' time, to have been of heavenly origin. He is said to have been miraculously born of the pure and holy Maya, his birth was announced by the Messianic star, and there was joy in heaven, the Devas singing: "Today Bodhisattva is born on earth to give joy and peace to men and Devas." Krishna while living was simply a great Hindu leader and hero, but in about 400 B. C. he was deified and was declared to be an incarnation of Vishnu (the Hindu God) and born of a chaste virgin named Devaki. The Indian Saviour, Gautama, was likewise believed to have been miraculously born of the virgin queen Maya.

The Greek and Roman converts to Christianity, like all of their race, believed that all great men, who far excelled their fellow-men, were of supernatural origin. Origen, an early and prominent theologian of the Christian church, in his writings states that

it was then the common belief that a man equipped with uncommon wisdom and power must have sprung from higher and divine seed. Romulus, Augustus, Scipio Africanus, and a number of others, were believed to have been the sons of gods. Alexander the Great and Pythagoras were believed to be the sons of the god Zeus. The funeral oration of Plato's nephew, Spensippus, makes mention of the legend current during the great philosopher's life that Periktone, Plato's mother, bore him not as the child of her husband, but of the god Apollo.

The virgin-birth story is not of Jewish origin. The Christian Jews deemed it sufficient that their Messiah should be a direct lineal descendant of the house of David. It is a belief that took its rise nearly 100 years after Jesus' death. It originated with Christian converts who belonged to a nation that believed all its heroes and great men had been miraculously born.

CHAPTER V

God or Man?

We dwelt at some length, in the previous chapter, on the Christian belief in the virgin birth of Jesus because of its importance. It is so closely linked with the belief in his being a constituent part of the Godhead, that it is a question whether the two beliefs must not stand or fall together. To the extent that our faith is impaired in the one, does it not to the same extent impair our faith in the other?

We find passages in the synoptic gospels which clearly indicate that Jesus must have been divine, we find other passages in the same gospels which just as clearly indicate that he was regarded, not as divine, but no more than simply as a man. Which are correct? A reasonable presumption is that during his lifetime he was regarded as purely human and that as time passed he gradually came to be clothed with divine attributes.

The first three gospels virtually agree in all main particulars and for this reason are called "synoptic." The fourth gospel, the Gospel According to John, tells quite a different story and is in some respects plainly contradictory of the first three. In the synoptic gospels Jesus' work is wholly confined to Galilee until the last week of his life, in the fourth gospel it is almost entirely in and about Jerusalem. In the synoptics the period of his action is one year at most, while the fourth gospel makes it two to

three years, or covering three annual Passover feasts. The words of Jesus in the fourth gospel differ altogether in language and style from his words in the first three gospels. When you turn from the three to the fourth his very thoughts undergo a strange transformation. In place of the parables and the pregnant sayings in the first three, we have lengthy arguments and allegories in the fourth. John is believed to have written Revelation, the last book of the New Testament, but the words, the style and the idioms are quite different in Revelation from what they are in the fourth gospel.

A careful reading of the fourth gospel shows an anti-Jewish spirit fully as pronounced as that shown by Paul in his contentions with the disciples, and this is an additional reason why it could not have been written by John the disciple, who was one of the pillars in Jerusalem and imbued with strong Jewish prejudices.

In the fourth gospel the author so mixes the supposed words of Jesus with his own words and comments that it is often impossible to tell where the one ends and the other begins. When in it you read the lengthy discourses represented to have been delivered by Jesus, you can't help but think that you are reading, not Jesus' actual words, but what the author thinks he would have spoken on the subjects discussed. The putting into the mouth of the speaker supposed utterances, is a license which was frequently practiced in the early days.

This gospel was written in about the year 150 A. D. and the author of it probably was an educated Christian convert who belonged to the school of

Philo. The author's evident purpose was to identify the Word, or "Logos," of Plato with Jesus, and to conform Christianity with the current Greek philosophy with the view of making Christian converts among the Greeks.

The relatives of Jesus did not regard him as being more than human. As previously stated, there were times when they found fault with him and did not always approve of his course of action. His disciples regarded him as their superior but always as their fellow-man. They expostulated with him, and at one time Peter took occasion to rebuke him. Does this indicate that they believed him God? During the trial of Jesus, Peter denied he was one of his disciples. In the garden of Gethsemane they all forsook him and fled. Even after his crucifixion Jesus was to Peter only "a man approved of God." In Acts 2:36 Peter is reported to have said: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." If God made him Lord, there was a time when he wasn't Lord. If he made him Lord at his death, he could not have been Lord before his death. And this appears to have been the view of his disciples, that he became divine at his death and that God placed him at His right hand.

Jesus was a prophet, as were the Baptist and the prophets of the Old Testament. Tho a prophet, his foretelling power appears to have been restricted. Unlimited it would have been had he been part of the Godhead. When speaking of the final judgment

day, as stated in Mark 13:32, he says that he does not know when that hour comes, that the Father alone knows. He is alleged to have wrought miracles, but so did the prophets of old, his disciples and others, as it is alleged. He performed what were considered wonderful cures, there is no question, but his power to cure diseases could not have been absolute or divine power. It was conditioned on the faith of the sick. In Mark 6:5, it is expressly stated that he could "do no mighty work" in Nazareth because of the unbelief of his townsmen save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk and healed them. In Mark 1:32 to 34, it is stated that he did not cure all the sick that were brought before him, but that he cured many, again showing that his power to cure was limited. His alleged power of resuscitating life must have had its origin in tradition, for reasons already given.

The most reliable source of our knowledge concerning Jesus is his own testimony of himself. He called himself the son of God, but he said we all were the sons of God. He spoke with equal ease of "My Father" and "Our Father." In his sermon on the Mount he called all peacemakers the sons of God. According to the Apostles' Creed, he is "the only begotten Son." Jesus himself at no time made that claim. Nor did he at any time claim that he was part of the Godhead. He never even alluded to the Trinity.

If Jesus is "Very God of Very God, being of one substance with the Father," as is set forth in the Nicene Creed, he must inherently possess

all the attributes of God, the attributes of self-existence, omnipotence and omniscience. However on various occasions he plainly declares a positive limitation of his power. On one occasion, as reported in John 5:30, he says: "I can of myself do nothing; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is righteous; because I seek not my own will, but the will of Him that sent me." These cannot be the words of a God. He did not claim to be perfect. On another occasion he said, "Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God" (Mark 10:18). How like a man, and how unlike a God, he thus speaks.

In place of being conscious of any superhuman origin or nature, he speaks as a man addressing his brother men. He is so meek and unpretending that one time he even washes the feet of his disciples. He did this for the purpose of more fully impressing on their minds the great importance of humble service to our fellow-men. He is a man like ourselves. He is beset with temptation. Can God be tempted? He suffers as others suffer. He has his hours of discouragement and gloom. He shows anger, annoyance, amazement. He uses the common language of his countrymen concerning demoniacal possession, believing that epilepsy and other diseases are caused from being possessed of a devil. Could "the only Son of God, substantially one with the Father," have held such mistaken views? He was also mistaken in his belief that the world would soon come to an end. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels," he said, "and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds.

Verily I say unto you, there are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

All thru life he prayed to God as a man who places his absolute dependence on Him. He gave thanks to God for whatever he received or was able to accomplish. He prayed for strength and support. How could the Infinite pray to the Infinite? It would seem as tho he had prayed to himself. While in Gethsemane in much sorrow he prayed: "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39). How like a man this sounds, showing his absolute dependence on God. This prayer alone refutes all claims that "He and the Father are one." According to both Matthew and Mark, the last words that Jesus uttered shortly before his death were words of momentary despair: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" According to Luke, his last words, as would be those of any good man, were: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

It is maintained that Jesus was clothed with a twofold nature while on earth; that he was both God and man, and that as long as he remained on earth he assumed all the limitations of man. It is not claimed, however, that he had a double consciousness. The idea of two natures in one person is highly illogical. His own conscious self must have been the same, whether in heaven or on earth. It could not have been otherwise, else he as God and he as man could not have been the same person, but

two entirely distinct persons. By coming on earth and assuming a physical body, we can well understand that he may have assumed the physical limitations of man and lost the attribute of omnipotence, but the divine attribute of omniscience he could never lose without becoming an entirely distinct person in his conscious self. What a being once knows can never be obliterated, unless, of course, thru disease. What Jesus knew while in heaven he could not have forgotten while on earth.

A man may be bereft of power, position and wealth so as to make a great change in his life, yet his spiritual nature and attributes, his conscious self, will be the same, no matter how great the change in his physical life. By coming on earth and assuming man's physical body, as already stated, Jesus may have assumed all the physical limitations of man, but his psychical being could not change without becoming quite a different and distinct person. He could not surrender his former knowledge. If he was omniscient in heaven, he must have been omniscient while on earth, and yet there were a number of things that he professed he did not know.

We are distinctly told in Luke that the child Jesus grew in knowledge and that as he became older he advanced both in wisdom and stature. In place of having the unlimited knowledge of a Divine Being, the Gospel of Luke tells us that his knowledge gradually increased the same as it would in any youth.

We are told the personality of Jesus is a mystery that the limited mind of man cannot fathom, yet the acknowledgment of mystery does not imply belief in contradictions. That Jesus, a constituent part of the

Godhead with knowledge that is infinite in extent, should for a time while on earth have had his knowledge limited within human bounds and yet be the same conscious self, is an absolute contradiction. He could not at the same time have been conscious of knowing all things and of not knowing all things. It is absurd to think that he should have been possessed of a mind, while on earth, that was constantly oscillating between the finitude of the human and the infinitude of the divine. The Jesus of the Gospels pictured to us as man and the Jesus of the Gospels pictured to us as part of the Godhead are entirely distinct and could not possibly have been one and the same personality. Man he undoubtedly was. Tradition later made him God.

Altho many of the teachings of Jesus imply that he was no more than man, others as reported in the Gospels plainly imply that he was divine. How can this be accounted for? We must remember that his words were not taken down at the time they were spoken, that they were not placed in writing until 30 or more years afterward, and that even then they were written down in a language different from that in which they were originally spoken. It is very evident that his teachings have not been preserved to us in the very same words in which they were spoken. The Gospels themselves furnish evidence of this. The wording of the Lord's Prayer, which one should think would have been preserved word for word, is quite different in Luke from what it is in Matthew. The words spoken at the celebration of the Lord's Supper are not the same in Matthew,

Mark, or Luke. His severe condemnation of the Pharisees is clothed in different words in Luke from what it is in Matthew. Being that there are these variances in the different reports of his teachings, notwithstanding that their import is substantially the same in all of them, we can well understand that after the belief began to prevail that he was divine, part of his teachings may gradually have been modified so as to have them conform with that belief. This could well have occurred without any intention to deceive on the part of those who edited the Gospels or made copies of them.

Another important fact to remember in this connection is that the conception of the Messiah as held by Jesus was quite different from that subsequently accepted and held by the Christian church. Jesus believed himself to be the Messiah, selected by Jehovah, in the sense that he was to be the reformer and saviour of his own people. Believing himself to be the chosen instrument of the Jewish God Jehovah, he at times used expressions which would necessarily imply his divinity when viewed from the standpoint of such who held the Christian conception of the Messiah.

We sometimes hear it said that Jesus must have been either divine or an impostor. If he had represented himself to be all that in later years was believed of him, there would be much reason for saying that he must have been one or the other. However, outside of believing himself to be the Jewish Messiah, chosen as such by Jehovah, he made no pretensions of any kind. A more sincere or perfect man

than he never lived. No man had taught as lofty truths before his time.

In almost every age there lived a man who in his ideals and his attainments far surpassed his fellow-men, appearing as a bright luminary dimming all other stars around him. Jesus far excelled in spiritual thought and deed, as did Shakespere in poetry, Plato in philosophy, or our own Washington and Lincoln in true statesmanship. Jesus was not the first or only man who was believed to be divine. It was the custom in the early days to deify those who far excelled their fellow-men. Had a Washington or a Lincoln lived in those times, they would have been worshipped as gods within a century after they had passed from earth. It was no fault of Jesus, it was to his credit, that he was deified and made One with God soon after he had passed away. We truly believe that if his people at any time in his life had attempted to worship him as God, he would have done as did Paul and Barnabas when the people of Lystra were fain to worship them as gods, he would have become horrified and would have rent his clothes (Acts 14:14).

Those who are professing the so-called orthodox faith may not realize to what extent they are violating Sacred Scripture by worshipping Jesus as God or part of the Godhead. In the first of the Ten Commandments God is represented as declaring, "I am Jehovah thy God, thou shalt have no other gods before me." Nothing is here said of the Godhead consisting of parts. All are eliminated, parts or wholes, save One. In Isaiah 45:22 we read: "I am God, there is none else." In Mark 12:32 it is stated:

"God is One, there is no other but He." And yet, in our hymns, in our prayers, in our various church rituals, Jesus seemingly comes first and God has fallen quite into the background. Jesus-worship has in large measure been crowding out worship of God.

We have heard it said, "If you take away Jesus, our divine Saviour, we have nothing tangible to cling to in our worship. In order that they might have something tangible to cling to, is the very thing that caused primitive people to worship idols and brought on idolatry. There is no need of doing away with Jesus. He is the greatest and best teacher we have. He is our ideal of perfection. We should strive to follow his precepts. But we believe that we are making a most serious mistake to worship him as God.

The belief in Jesus as our God or part of the Godhead, obscures and mystifies that simple and beautiful life he lived. It makes him a mysterious being whom somehow we can't rightly consider as either God or man. It places him beyond the range of human sympathies. His example becomes a delusion. How can we hope to measure up to the Omnipotent? It robs us of the noblest example of manhood the world has ever known. It gives us a God disguised as man, who is not living the real life of a human soul, but is acting a part in the great drama of life. It clothes him with a life that is insincere. If he be the Infinite and Almighty, his temptations and sufferings could not have been real. His prayers could not have been real.

On the other hand, if Jesus was a man like all of us, his prayers at once become full of meaning, full of purpose and significance. He makes our problems of life the same as his own. We can sympathize with his trials and sufferings. He fills us with inspiration and courage to emulate his example. What he has been is a type of what we all may hope to reach. He becomes for us truly, "the way, the truth and the life."

As One with God, his life on earth appears pitiful and thwarted in its purposes; but as a man, we cannot find words to express the grandeur and greatness of his life on earth. As Deity he fades away into a shadowy myth, as a man he is the grandest and best who ever lived, "the topmost, finest flower on the tree of our great humanity."

We presume we will be charged, the same as have been all others of like conviction, with attempting to tear down Christianity and giving nothing in return. We are simply trying to tear down hurtful dogmas that grew up in a dark and credulous age, dogmas which have lifted up and placed the Nazarene by the side of our God, dividing between them the honor and worship which belong to our God alone, with the result that it has divided Christendom into disagreeing sects and factions and has caused thousands of men and women to keep outside of the church. And is there nothing left? All that is strictly essential to Christianity still remains. Among the chief requisites for our salvation Jesus mentions repentance for our sins, right living, obedience to and love of God as our Father, and he lays particular stress on service

to our fellow-men. Whatsoever we do to help the hungry, the naked, the sick, or those in prison, we are told, we do it for our God. Not at any time did Jesus claim our worship of him as one of the alleged Triune God, nor did he claim or even intimate that our salvation depends on our faith in the washing away of our sins by his shed-blood.

CHAPTER VI.

Conclusion.

The belief in God is well-nigh universal, but the conception of Him varies very materially. We find all shades of opinion held as to His character and attributes.

The deist believes that God is distinct from the world, entirely separated from it, and consequently denies that there is a divine providence governing the affairs of men.

The theist differs from the deist in that he believes that God sustains a personal relation to his creatures. He neither affirms nor denies the doctrines of Christianity.

The Christian believes in divine providence, the divine inspiration of the Bible and in the doctrines of the Trinity and the vicarious atonement. A man may be a theist and not be a Christian, but he cannot be a Christian without being a theist.

The Unitarian believes that Jesus of Nazareth was a great and good man, of wonderful personality and possessed of the elements of divinity so far as it is possible for man to possess them, but does not believe in the doctrines of the Trinity and of the blood atonement. He likewise believes that the Bible was written by devout and saintly men, but that it is not of divine inspiration in the sense as held by the Christians, and is therefore not infallible.

All the beliefs thus far named regard God as a personal moral being, distinct from the universe, of

which He is the creator and ruler. The pantheist is in a class by himself. He does not regard God as a personal being. He believes that God and the universe are identical, or that God is the only substance of which the material universe and man are mere manifestations.

The agnostic as a rule believes in God, a Superior Power, but doesn't say whether in a theistic or pantheistic sense. The agnostic in effect says: "God may be all the Christians believe He is, but it is incapable of proof; I don't believe it, I don't disbelieve it, I simply don't know."

Atheism is purely a negative belief. The term has usually been applied to those who dissented from the then prevalent belief. Max Müller in one of his lectures says: "The early Christians were called atheists because they did not believe as the Greeks believed, nor as the Jews believed. Spinoza was called an atheist because his concept of God was wider than that of Jehovah, and the Reformers were called atheists because they would not deify the mother of Christ or worship the saints." The infidel, like the atheist, is a man without faith. He differs from an atheist in that he rejects the distinctive doctrines of only some particular religion.

The only belief there is which says there is no God is materialism. The elementary substance composing the universe, which the pantheist calls God, the materialist names simply matter. He claims that from matter in motion has been evolved all that exists. He denies that there exists in man an immaterial substance which alone is conscious, distinct and separable from the body, claiming that "what

we know as psychical phenomena in man and other animals are to be interpreted, in an ultimate analysis, as simply the peculiar aspect which is assumed by certain enormously complicated motions of matter." Mind cannot communicate with mind save thru the medium of matter. We have no knowledge of mind existing independently of body. So far as we know the psychical cannot exist without the physical, but the physical can exist without the psychical. Matter and the motions of matter, continues the materialist, make up the sum total of existence.

The materialist may pride himself on his knowledge and his ability to resolve things into their elements, but where does he get his ability, his power of knowing from? It is impossible for him to account for the faculties of the mind, such as memory, reason, judgment and experience. Material that moves or changes always takes the path of least resistance, it does not take that path which judgment or experience teaches is the better path. It knows nothing of these powers, nor can it account for them. Materialism can in no way account for the conscious self in man, or for the genesis of conscious life.

Everywhere thruout the universe we see thought and design and back of it surely there must be a Thinker big enough to be the source of it all. We well know the materialist claims that the doctrine of evolution does away with all evidence of design and that what was formerly believed to show adaptation of means to a preconceived end can now easily be explained from natural causes which do not imply intelligence. We are free to admit that what one

time were considered evidences of design can now be explained from natural causes, but this is true only to a limited extent. Back of it all is a teleology that cannot be accounted for from mere natural causes. Look where we may in the natural world, we see order and system and well defined purpose that cannot possibly be the result of an irrational power working at random chance. How could so delicate and intricate an organ as the eye, for example, have been produced by mere blind force. How can we account for conscious thought and reason being here? The product created certainly cannot be greater, more intelligent and more rational than the Power that creates. The existence of reason necessarily implies a rational Creator. As has been well said: "From a rational humanity and a rational universe, constituting one rational system, we infer a rational God. There can be no other inference."

We must remember that evolution never created anything. It simply has discovered the orderly method used by our God in the process of life's development. It cannot account for the origin of life. The materialist claims that life is inherent in matter and that it was originally produced in its very simplest form by what is termed spontaneous generation. But biological science has shown that it requires life to produce life, or that there is no living thing that has not descended from pre-existing life. Furthermore, our earth is claimed by scientists to have been originally a fiery mass of nebulous matter and that it took hundreds of years for our planet to cool and condense sufficiently before it was capable of sustaining life. If life is inherent in matter, every

germ of life contained in the matter composing this earth must have been destroyed a thousand times during the long period that the earth was in its fiery molten state.

Our God is a personal being and not simply an unconsciously active and creative Force of nature, mindless and thoughtless. He hears, He sees, He determines. Man himself is the best proof that God is a personal being, for man is a person endowed with reason and self-consciousness and the creature certainly cannot be greater than his Creator.

We necessarily can know very little of the nature and character of God. The finite cannot comprehend the infinite. He differs from us in that He is a spiritual being. Our present sphere of life is confined to a very small corner in the boundless world around us. However, we have every reason to believe that our God is a benevolent being, and that everything in this world is intended for our ultimate good. There is a great deal of evil and suffering in the world, it is true, but may they not serve a very useful and necessary purpose? In order for man to develop into a moral being, it was necessary that he be given a large share of personal freedom. He must have the power to become immoral, else he cannot choose and determine to become moral. If he were incapable of sin, he would be incapable of virtue. If there were no evil, there could be no merit in being good. Evil must exist in order for man to develop character and become morally strong. All the perfection he attains is due to successful battling against evil. Pain ministers to our good, the same as does evil. It serves as a warning, a beneficent guide,

whenever there is something wrong with our physical bodies. Sorrow is a wise teacher, affliction oftentimes a blessing, suffering a means of moral education. Without both evil and suffering there could have been no progressive development in man. And while there is evil and suffering, there is so very much more good in this world. We would enjoy the good less than half as much and would fail to appreciate it, if all were good. It is true, too, that much of the existing evil is of man's own making and a necessary consequence of his being endowed with free will. Much of the evil we find in the world is simply the abuse of what in its place is right and proper. Intemperance in drinking and eating is an evil of this kind, so is the improper indulgence of the passions. In order to support himself and those dependent on him, it is meet and proper for man to acquire property by honest work and effort. It is the abuse of this right that results in theft, robbery and even murder. War with all the misery that follows in its wake is almost invariably caused by the abuse of man's powers, which are so necessary for his development when rightly used.

We need but look around us and see how much has been done, not blindly but with an evident purpose, for our sustenance, health, comfort, enjoyment and progress, and, realizing that even the evil and suffering in this world are intended for our ultimate good, we can come to no other just conclusion than that there is a benevolent God above us.

We believe that human life does not end with the grave, that there is a hereafter. This has been the

prevailing belief among men from the very first, even while man was still in a savage state. So universal has it been that the belief appears to be part of man's nature and implanted in his very being. What has been believed in all ages and by all races of men must be true, for this is the only way we can account for the universal prevalence of such belief. Furthermore, what is implanted in man's very nature has been implanted there by God, who implants no lies, who in no way misleads or deceives.

We cannot fail to realize that success, honor and happiness in this life have not in all cases been dealt out to men according to their just deserts. We see many a good man suffer from no fault of his own, while we see others, whom we know to be base and unworthy, surrounded with every comfort and enjoyment. If God is just, and we know He is, there must be a future life to square things, to justify the seeming inequalities of this life. We believe we will be thankful in the next world for any suffering we here endured, which at the time we thought we did not deserve. Many a worthy man who is now filling one of the humblest vocations in life will probably be filled with gratitude in the next world that in this world he did not belong to the idle rich.

We believe in a future life because of the evident superiority of the spiritual nature of man over his physical. We all realize that there is something worth living for which the things of this earth do not satisfy. We cannot fail to see the incompleteness of this life to satisfy all of man's spiritual powers and desires. We believe in a future life because of the wholesome effect such belief has on human effort

and character; it consoles the sorrowing, it encourages us in our trials, it inspires us to all that is pure and worthy.

A strong argument in favor of the future life is the law of conservation. All the scientists agree that it is impossible to destroy anything. Nothing that exists ever perishes. It simply changes its form. We see a dewdrop on a blade of grass totally disappear, and yet it still exists in the form of vapor. A fire burns up a log of wood. It does not destroy the log. It simply reduces it back to its elements. Man we are told sprung from the dust of the ground and back to the ground he goes again at death. His physical body certainly does. But man does not consist alone of clay. There is something in him quite distinct from his corporal body. His conscious self, the rational and spiritual part of him, clay cannot produce. The physical body does not become extinct after death. It simply changes its form, like the dewdrop on a blade of grass. Nor, by virtue of the same law, does the conscious element in man become extinct at death. For his rational and spiritual self it is simply the dawn of another life.

The great Creator of the universe took many centuries to create man and to develop him to what he is. Does man become extinct with death? Does all God's work go for naught? We may well believe that the present life is simply a life of preparation and training and that our God has use for us for all time somewhere in this boundless universe, or He would not have created us in the first place.

When a man enters one of our extensive manufacturing plants and is conducted into the compartment

wherein the power of the plant is being transmitted to its many different sections, all that he sees in this compartment is nothing but a vast and intricate series of shafts and belts and wheels of all sizes, one setting the other in motion and all moving with the utmost precision. If this should happen to be the first time he ever entered a manufacturing plant, it will appear to him that all of the work is being done by machinery and that very few employees are required to keep it in operation. But as he is being conducted thru the various other sections of the plant, he becomes astounded at the very large number of hands that are being necessarily employed in order to produce the manufactured product.

We here on earth have as yet entered into but one compartment, so to speak, of this vast universe. All that we see appears to require no guiding or directing hands and is being operated by what we term natural laws. When the time comes that our vision becomes extended we may be astounded at the innumerable number of helping hands the great Ruler makes use of to conduct and operate this universe without limit or end.

The next life will be a state of retribution. We cannot believe in a life of eternal hell and torment. It is altogether unreasonable. It is degrading to our God even to think it. He, loving and merciful, could not possibly inflict so outrageously severe, cruel and endless a punishment. But while He is loving and merciful, He is also just and there can be no question but that those who here lead idle and immoral lives will meet with their just deserts in the

next world, also that those who lead useful and worthy lives will be amply rewarded. All indications go to show that we are here on probation, that this is a life of preparation and training for our duties in the life to come, where we will meet with promotion or degradation, happiness or disappointment, according as we deserve.

Where our paths of duty lie it is not difficult for us to determine. Whenever we err, it isn't usually because of a mistake of judgment, but because we do not follow what our best judgment dictates. We do well to remember that the Bible has guided and strengthened many of our best and most worthy men and has been the inspiration of their most noble deeds. We cannot impress on our minds too deeply how detrimental to our interests it is to make pleasure and amusement our principal aim in life, also how detrimental to our interests is every effort on our part to acquire wealth without earning it by hard work and the practice of economy. The rewards of a clean, moral and helpful life are beyond compare with anything that wealth can purchase. We should at all times feel thankful and grateful to our Maker and Provider. Ingratitude is one of the basest of sins. Shame on the man who feels that ungrateful to neglect getting on his knees at night before retiring to thank God for all that he has reason to be thankful for. Communion with the Almighty thru prayer encourages us to all that is worthy and uplifting. Parents sadly neglect their duty who fail regularly to send their children to the Sunday school of one of our churches. They there learn much that is good and helpful to them in after life. Many a child

in his mature years has brought shame and sorrow on the heads of his parents because of their neglect of this duty. Many a man about to commit a crime has been saved from doing so by a sudden awakening of conscience caused by the inner prompting of something he had learned while a boy at Sunday school.

Every man and woman should belong to a Christian church. No organization has ever accomplished as much good as has the church. We may not believe in all its creeds, but this is not essential. Christianity, if it follows the precepts of its great founder, is not a doctrine but a life, not the reception of a system of dogmas but a sincere effort to serve God and our fellow-men. No organization, however good, is perfect. The church was founded on solid rock, or it would not have survived till now, but we must remember that it was organized in the dark days of superstition and what more could we have expected than that some superstitious beliefs would naturally grow up with it, beliefs that are not essential to its life and beliefs that its founder evidently knew nothing about. The great task of the church today is to rid itself of these ancient and fanatic beliefs and doctrines.

In its early formative period the church was quite progressive. It discarded the non-essentials and reformed the abuses that had crept into the religious worship of the Jews. This progressive spirit it soon lost, however, because the belief in divine revelation gradually came to be the accepted belief. Its creeds and doctrines had been divinely revealed or were directly founded on the revealed word, as it was

thought, therefore they could not be changed or improved. Century after century passed and the world was making wonderful progress along all other lines of human effort, but there was no change or improvement in the doctrines of the church. And yet the Christian religion, notwithstanding its antiquated dogmas, continually grew stronger and became a wonderful factor in the world's progress, simply by reason of the most excellent teachings of its founder. In this enlightened age, however, the Christian church is too severely handicapped. It has lost its hold. Just about half of the people that ought to be within its fold are on the outside. Many that still belong to it are mere nominal members. It will not again become the power for good that it is capable of, till it discards the doctrines of the Trinity and the blood atonement and the old view of revelation.

We fully realize that many a good Christian believes that if we take away his faith in the shed blood of his Saviour as his sole hope for salvation in the next world, we are practically taking away all that there is of his religion. However, when he discards this, his faith and hope, he virtually discards only the selfish part of his religion, his anxiety about the salvation of self. "Let the morrow take care of itself," was meant to be taken more particularly in a spiritual sense. A clean and useful life will avail us of much more saving grace than will mere faith. Let us follow the Nazarene not as our Saviour and God, but as our teacher and guide. He himself taught us to worship God, to worship no substitute, no trio of Gods, but solely God, as our Father. Isn't it out of

place for us to worship Jesus as "The only begotten Son," when he frequently declared that all of us who do His will are the sons of God. We do not need a mediator or intercessor. The Nazarene taught that our Father in heaven is more near to us even than is the father on earth to his children, that He is more ready to forgive us, if we are penitent, and more ready and willing to overlook our failings and shortcomings than are our earthly parents.

In place of marching forward under the banner of the cross, we would do well to emblaze our standard with two inscriptions that in the main embody all that Jesus of Nazareth taught — at the top the scription, "The Fatherhood of God and The Brotherhood of Men," and underneath in letters almost as large, "Whatsoever We Sow That Shall We Also Reap."